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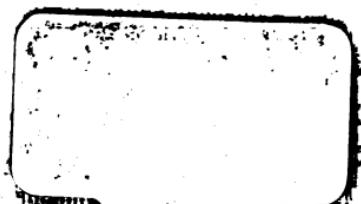
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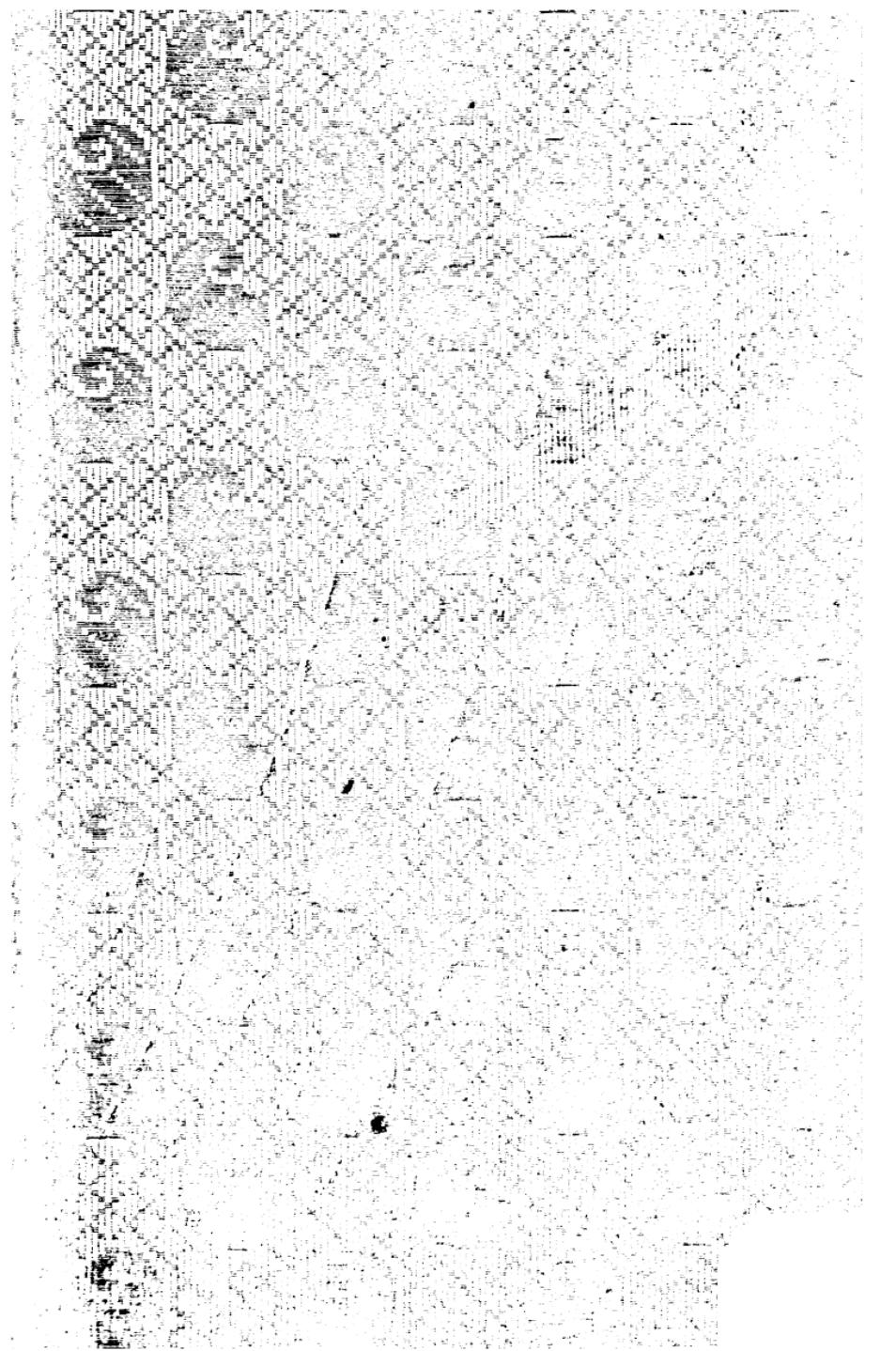
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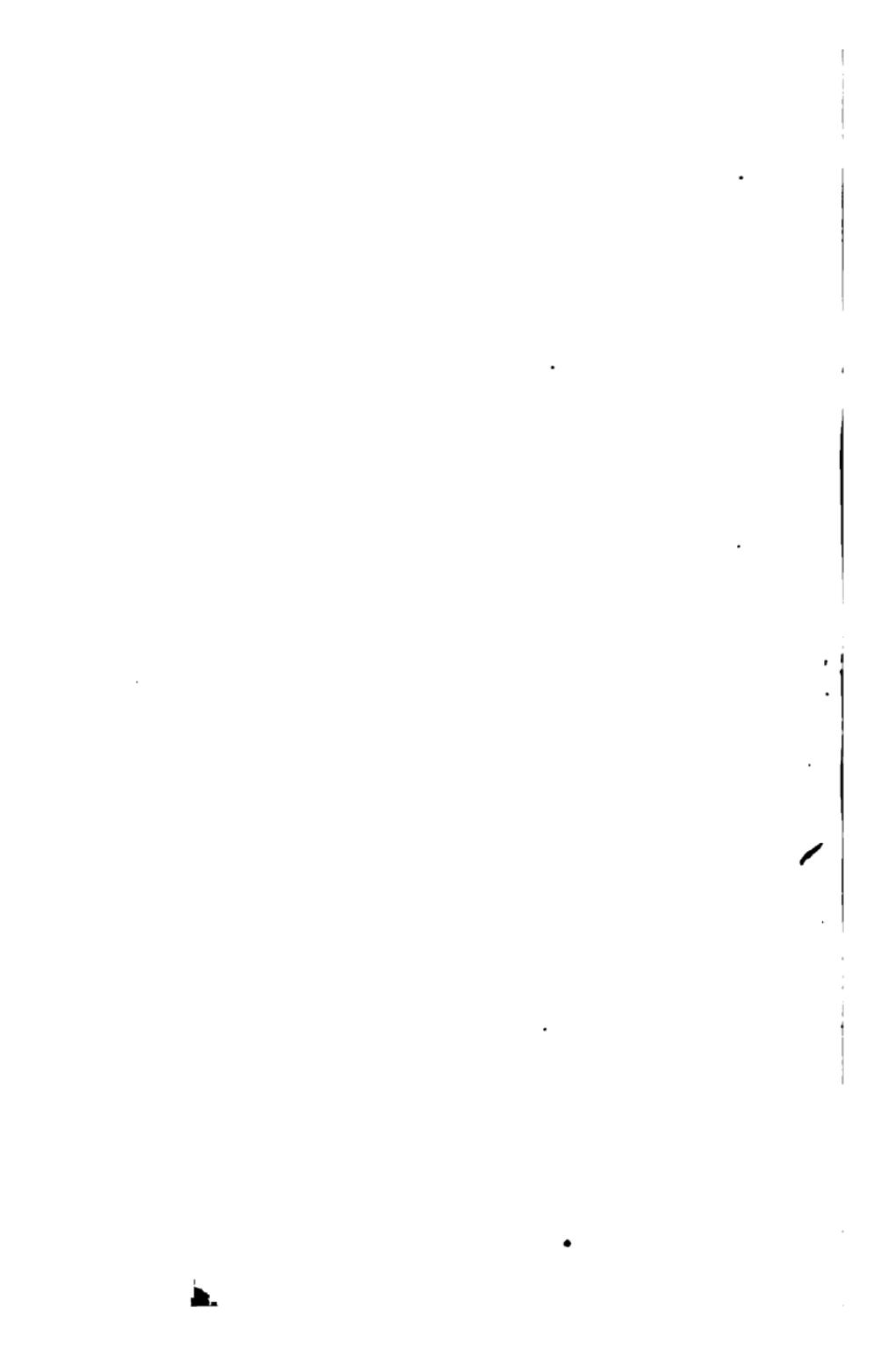
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# **SELF-EDUCATION;**

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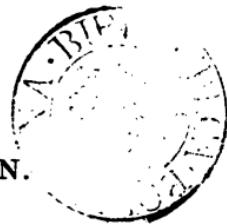
## **VALUE OF MENTAL CULTURE,**

**WITH THE**

### **PRACTICABILITY OF ITS ATTAINMENT**

**UNDER DISADVANTAGES.**

**BY WILLIAM ROBINSON.**



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**SECOND EDITION.—ENLARGED.**

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**1845.**

**ENTERED AT THE STATIONER'S HALL.**

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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In submiting a new Edition of the following work to the reader's notice, the Author would not omit the opportunity of expressing his satisfaction that the subject on which it treats, if not its execution, is so far appreciated by the public, as to render its republication expedient within a comparatively short period, since its first appearance.

An awakened attention to the importance of mental culture, and the value, we might add the *sufficiency* of those resources for its attainment possessed by the humbler classes of this country, is the great principle sought to be established in the following pages. If amid the present rivalry of educational schemes, the masses are to be materially

raised in the scale of intellect, it must be mainly by the reception and the practical working of this same principle. Let this conviction be deeply engrafted in the mind, and it will not fail to issue in the most satisfactory results, despite of outward disadvantages. At the same time it is to be remembered, that the idea of Self-education becomes almost daily less restricted in its application, by the cheapening of literature and the increasing ingenuity by which it is more and more adapted to obviate the want of time and of oral instruction.

In the present edition, several needful corrections have been made, and an entirely new chapter has been added, which stands as the fifth. The intelligent reader it is hoped, will see that the subject of that chapter is by no means unimportant. The Author is indebted to a literary friend both for suggesting that addition, and also for supplying it; and if the reader have any disposition to complain of its execution, the apology is, that it was not thought of until after the work had gone to press, and the writer therefore laboured under the peculiar inconvenience of having to write it hastily.

W. R.

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# SELF-EDUCATION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### POPULAR IGNORANCE.

THE ignorance of man, and the natural infirmity of his understanding, present the most decisive evidence that he is in a fallen condition; and they are indeed to be numbered among the most melancholy effects of his fall. The intellectual powers most visibly bear the impress of degeneracy. The mind is evidently degraded below its original dignity; it is, as it were, in a state of confinement, and can only view the world of truth through the chinks of its prison-doors: its views are consequently narrow and imperfect. On the one hand, it is exposed to the blinding and misleading influence of perverse inclinations; while on the other, it is shackled in its operations by the infirmities of the physical organs through which it acts. Yet still the mind is noble even in its degradation, and,

in spite of its fetters, is occasionally seen to mount to a considerable elevation. In the eminent attainments of some superior minds, we have a glimpse of the intellectual majesty of man when first created.

Man is declared to have been "created in the image of God," and the fact that Adam could readily give names to all the animals brought before him, precisely descriptive of their natures, shewed, that he resembled his Creator in his intelligence—the declaration significantly intimated, and the fact strikingly developed the grandeur of the human intellect before it was darkened and disordered by sin. It is probable that the understanding of man, previous to the fall, would be quick, clear, and comprehensive, beyond our present conceptions. His memory would distinctly and tenaciously retain the ideas committed to its trust; and though his knowledge would necessarily be limited, yet it would not be mixed with error: it would be correct as far as it went. Those objects which his faculties were fitted to comprehend, would be comprehended truly. Distance might render some objects invisible, and others indistinct; but there would be no fault in the faculty or the medium to give it a false appearance.

We cannot, indeed suppose, that all truth would be intuitively certain; that every proposition would be self-evident: but certainly the process of reasoning would be infinitely more clear, easy, and

compendious than that to which fallen man is now obliged to submit. Little do we now know with absolute certainty; and it is by dark, perplexing, and circuitous traits, that we reach many of our conclusions. A single science cannot be mastered but by years of intense application; and in all cases, knowledge is not to be obtained without strenuous and unwearied efforts—efforts which sometimes wear out the body, or injure the tender organs by which the mind performs its operations.

But if the most cultivated part of the human species exhibits affecting proofs of the scanty limits of human knowledge, and the enfeebled condition of human minds; how much more glaring and melancholy are those proofs as exhibited by persons wholly without education. If superior beings “shewed our Newton, as we shew an ape,” how would they shew one of those human beings, who are, in point of fact, but a small remove from the ape. If angels would be more disposed to pity the ignorance, than to admire the sagacity of the man, who “explained all nature’s law,” what would be their views of those individuals, who scarcely know what it is to exercise their understandings at all, and whose knowledge is limited to the very few objects which relate to their most ordinary concerns: but this is the actual condition of the majority of mankind.

Looking at the powerful and diversified agencies that have been in operation since the invention of

printing, for the mental improvement of man—considering the multiplication of books, schools, and christian instructors; it might, *a priori*, have not unnaturally been concluded, that the mass of the people, at least in this country, would be enlightened and well informed. That much has been accomplished, as well as attempted, cannot be denied; yet the effects can scarcely be said to correspond with the means employed. A state of ignorance is still the rule; knowledge the exception. Even this highly favoured country is but an intellectual desert, with only here and there a patch of cultivated soil. Comparatively few of the working classes appear to consider the improvement of the mind as forming any part of their duty; or have any idea of uniting scientific pursuits with the prosecution of business.

Some years ago it was stated by Dr. Dick, that of two millions of inhabitants in Scotland, there are not perhaps twenty thousand, or the hundredth part of the whole, whose knowledge extends to any subject of importance beyond the range of their daily avocations. We are inclined to think that this statement will apply pretty nearly to the rural population of England at the present time. If there be more than one, we question whether there be so many as two in every hundred, who may be considered general readers. The rest have no more knowledge than hear-say rumours and random observations have supplied. Such minds resemble a

piece of waste ground, with only here and there a tuft of useful grain springing from seed accidentally scattered, while all the rest is occupied by stones and weeds.

Those who are accustomed to associate only with educated people, may find it difficult to admit the correctness of these statements; they may think them inconsistent with the enormous and incessant issue of books, great and small, cheap and dear; but such surmisings would be dissipated by comparing the population of this country with the probable amount of books annually issuing from the press. If only one-tenth of the population had a taste for reading, the supply of books might be increased seven-fold. Not many years ago it was reckoned that England alone contained one million two hundred thousand adult persons who could not read at all.

From the returns of the registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, in the year 1840, it appears that of 121,000 marriages solemnized before the different registrars, 40,587 of the males, and 58,959 of the females could not write their own names. If it be objected that the parties married before the registrars are generally of the very lowest classes, yet it is to be remembered that the mere ability to write one's name, or to read, is a very insufficient test of an improved mind. He who cannot read or write his name must be ignorant; but thousands who can do both, are little less so.

Among the uninstructed classes, there are, it is true, the usual varieties of mind. Some are distinguished above others for quickness of intellect: you notice a tact for observation, a soundness of judgment, and a power of reasoning, which, with the assistance of education, would have raised them to a superior rank as men of talent. Wanting this, they remain the dupes of imposture, and the victims of error: the jewel is incrusted with earth, and cannot therefore shew its beauty. Education is a kind of intellectual grafting; it improves the fruits of genius both in size and quality.

As the corporeal senses are rendered more acute and efficient by exercise; the same is true of the mental powers. Where such exercise or training is wanting, mind appears to have been given in vain; its native powers exhibit a dwarfish and decrepid character. As an example of this, there are many, who, after having sat under an instructive Gospel Ministry for years, are, after all, so deplorably ignorant, that they could not give us an intelligible account of a single article of Revealed Religion. These persons, it would seem, never exercise their own judgment on the subjects they from time to time hear discussed; and by long inaction, the faculty has lost its power of exertion. More properly it may be said, that the habit of intellectual effort has never been acquired. By the same means the memory has been impaired; for they not only cannot form a judgment of a discourse, but often have little recollection of it.

The prevalence of religious ignorance forms a striking and melancholy illustration of our subject. We do not allude to this point in forgetfulness of the great and gratifying improvement that has taken place among the lower orders within the last century: yet still the state of things in this respect is sufficiently lamentable.

Every one will believe, that persons who habitually neglect to attend public worship, must, in general, be deplorably ignorant of divine truth. But it is calculated, that in the metropolis this is the case with a number nearly equal to half the population. We have thus, in the very centre of Christendom, above half a million of heathens. In the very focus of gospel light, we have five or six hundred thousand persons in deep darkness. Now, if the evil of non-attendance on Divine Worship is so alarmingly prevalent in the metropolis, it may be expected to be equally so elsewhere. In very many country villages the pure Gospel is not preached at all; and in the greater number of those where it is so, not a quarter of the adult population hear it with any thing like regularity. It may also be asserted, that the larger proportion of those who steadily attend places of worship, derive little perceptible benefit as it regards improvement in knowledge. The poor, generally, have not been taught to think for themselves; and when, to this mental insanity, is added the blinding influence of sin; no wonder that sacred truth is listened to in

vain. It is only "by reason of use that the senses are exercised to discern both good and evil." In the parable of the sower, our Saviour appears to teach that three-fourths of those who hear the word, do so virtually in vain. It is to be feared that the parable in this view, is but too truly applicable to the present state of things.

But we have not yet shewn the full extent of the prevalence of religious ignorance. Many of those who are professedly, and perhaps sincerely pious, labour under this great evil. Numbers of them seem not to be aware that religious knowledge is the basis of religious feeling; and that a person can only "grow in grace," in proportion as he grows in the "*knowledge of God.*" They imagine religion to consist chiefly, if not solely, in warm emotion or feeling, forgetting that emotion unsupported by conviction, cannot possibly maintain itself long; and that the more vehement is the fire, the more quickly it will burn itself out. Zeal without knowledge is not only transitory, but irregular, and often mischievous while it lasts. Those who profess great zeal in religion, with great ignorance, are proverbially head-strong, uncharitable, and self-conceited, and often do much more injury to the cause of scriptural piety, than they could have done if they had never made any pretence to it.

All young converts ought therefore to be frequently and seriously urged to seek the improvement of their minds in the knowledge of divine

things, as the only way to maintain their ground, and make proficiency in religious experience. They should be assured that nothing but religious knowledge can give correctness and stability to pious feeling, or real utility to practical zeal.

It must not be imagined that we confound knowledge of divine truth with divine influence; or that in displaying the importance of the former, we undervalue that of the latter. Natural light is a great blessing, but natural heat is more essential to animal existence; similar is the relative value of divine light and love. The mere study of divine truth will not make any man wise unto salvation, unless the influence of the Holy Spirit is imparted to open the understanding and purify the affections; such study should therefore be accompanied with earnest prayer for the communication of that influence. To mistake religious knowledge for religion itself, is too common an evil; but it is an evil not less to be shunned than total ignorance.

That ignorance is a positive evil is susceptible of clear demonstration; for it must be observed, that as useless weeds invariably abound in untilled soil, so the mind which is a stranger to correct general principles, and to rational modes of thinking, is usually well stocked with false notions, unreasonable prejudices, and ridiculous superstitions.

It would form a curious chapter in the history of popular ignorance, to describe the preposterous credulity of the vulgar in many country places, rela-

tive to *wise* men and fortune-tellers; to omens and apparitions; to unlucky days and unlucky deeds; to the influence of bad wishes, and the influence of the planets; and to a thousand things besides. These signs and wonders are equally astonishing for their great numbers; their contemptible absurdity; and for the firm hold which they take of the mind. In some families of respectability, this grovelling superstition is known to exercise a very extensive dominion, and its laws, which have been transmitted to them by immemorial tradition, they receive with undoubting confidence, and yield to them the most respectful obedience. But our surprise has been excited still more to find individuals, not wholly destitute\* of education, manifesting considerable deference to these childish mummeries.

\* Most of our readers are no doubt aware of the great number of rites and ceremonies observed by many country people at Christmas; and it is well known that not a few attach to these foolish observances a more than religious importance. To see a person turning up the soil on Good-Friday with spade or plough, would be regarded by the peasantry with something like horror, as an act of presumptuous sacrilege; and so firmly has this miserable piece of superstition struck its roots in the vulgar mind, that there is an almost general cessation of their labour on that day; the better informed not caring to expose themselves to the censures of their ignorant neighbours, by violating a custom, which, however unreasonable, is sanctified by immemorial usage. It would seem indeed, that the whole race of Fridays are laid under a special inter-

The extensive prevalence of these false notions, while they furnish a striking illustration of the extent of popular ignorance, must, at the same time, be numbered among the most considerable evils which it generates. They not only awaken many disquieting fears and apprehensions, which are vain and useless in the extreme, but often produce much inconvenience in other respects. They are not only ridiculous by their absurdity, and despicable by their opposition to common sense; but they are criminal also from their pernicious influence on religion. A belief in these idle dreams, for instance, is incompatible with just views of Divine Providence; it has the obvious effect of with-

dict by superstition. Its great law on this subject is, that *every thing will prove unfortunate that is attempted on that day*. Perhaps some of our readers, in whose neighbourhoods these follies are unknown, may think that no one sincerely believes this mysterious law. But we assure them to the contrary: for the fact is, no servant ever goes to his situation on a Friday; scarcely any among the lower or middle classes ever get married on that day; and not a few carry the matter so far, that they will not set off on a considerable journey, or attempt any thing of considerable importance on a Friday. And here also, the more intelligent often yield to the worthless scruples of their neighbours, and sanction that, by their conduct, which they despise in their hearts. In Scotland, the whole of the month of May is interdicted as a period of contracting marriage, and this custom is observed even by the higher orders. The same custom still lingers in Yorkshire and the north of England.

drawing the mind from that Scriptural and rational trust in Providence, which it is both our duty and privilege to exercise, and its whole tendency is to effect a substitution of unmeaning observances for that religion which purifies the heart and the life. And accordingly we have often noticed that those who are most credulous in these matters, are, in general, the greatest strangers to scriptural religion; while a true conversion seldom fails to set the mind free from this miserable bondage—a proof that there must be a mutual hostility.

Much more may be advanced in illustration of the evil of ignorance. Considered as intellectual poverty, it is degrading; and where there is poverty of ideas, there will also, to a certain extent, be imbecility of intellect; because knowledge expands the mind, and the very exercise by which it is acquired, at the same time invigorates the mental faculties. So far also as ignorance is wilful, it is *infamous* as well as despicable—not merely contemptible as a privation, but punishable as a crime.

A block of marble, untouched as yet by the artist, is a suitable emblem of an uncultivated mind. The material may be excellent in quality; yet in its unsculptured state, it has neither use nor beauty. Similarly unprofitable and devoid of beauty, are the strongest natural powers of the mind, when unimproved by education.

The artist does not more astonishingly enhance

the value of the block of metal, which he forms into an exquisite statue, than education raises the price of human minds.

Intelligence when united with moral worth, is the proper standard of respectability; and not the adventitious endowments of worldly wealth, dignified connexions, or personal accomplishments. The true dignity of man must be sought in his own mind: he can only ascend in the scale of being as he advances in intellectual vigour. That this doctrine is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, is manifest from the manner in which posthumous praise is bestowed. The memory of a philanthropist, or a philosopher is revered; but none revere that of a man merely because he was rich or titled. The honour which these external advantages procure for their possessor while living, is a merely external honour; neither proceeding from the heart, nor affecting the heart of him to whom it is bestowed—it is extorted by fear, or bartered for gain: it is the servile homage of ignorance, or the hollow adulation of hypocrisy. Public opinion is generally more correct when exercised concerning a deceased, than a living character; because it has often fewer temptations to swerve from the truth. Death is an enemy to falsehood and flattery. The awful and unchangeable condition of a disembodied spirit, strongly calls for a just judgment of his conduct while living.

Knowledge may indeed be practically useless;

but ignorance *must* be so. The fruit of knowledge may be pernicious, when it grows in the soil of a bad heart; but ignorance is naturally incapable of producing any thing good—it is a tree which can bear no fruit—its only characters are deformity, barrenness, and death. Ignorance may be clearly shewn to have the effect of contracting the capacity for piety, usefulness, and happiness. Its unfavourable influence on piety is very evident. It must indeed be regarded as a singular mark of divine goodness, that if a man be capable of any thing, whatever, he is capable of religious feeling. Even children who have but just learnt to distinguish good and evil, and men who are but one remove from idiots, become the subjects of converting grace. But then, if the minds of these persons were more enlarged and furnished, they would be capable of religious feeling of a far more vivid, definite, and influential character. For example, if they had clearer and more comprehensive views of the malignity of sin, and of their personal criminality; their abhorrence of sin would be stronger, and their sorrow for it more pungent. If their conceptions of the mediatorial character of the Redeemer, and the value of his atonement, were more enlarged and definite, their faith would stand upon a firmer and broader basis, and consequently be capable of rising to greater eminence. Again, if their acquaintance with the perfections of Deity, the laws which he has given to man, and the

relations which subsist between the creature and the Creator, were more intimate, comprehensive, and accurate; their devotional feeling might take a deeper tone, and rise to sublimer heights, and their obedience might be more enlightened and rational; more satisfying to themselves, and more acceptable to God.

To an uneducated person, some of the noblest pleasures of life are unknown, and inaccessible. The mind is formed to be delighted with knowledge, as the senses are fitted to be gratified with appropriate objects; but mental pleasure is far more exalted and satisfying than that which is merely corporeal, inasmuch as it affords pleasure to the higher powers of our nature. The acquisition of a new idea affords greater delight to the scholar, than an increase of property does to the miser; because the latter has the bitter reflection —if he will only indulge it—that he has only gained that which he must shortly lose; whereas the acquisition of the student becomes a part of his very being, and is dignified with the same immortality.

In the pursuit of knowledge, the mind is gratified by the exertion of its powers; much more so by seeing those powers to be sensibly improved. As it travels onward in its career of improvement, the passion for novelty is perpetually gratified; new objects and scenes are continually presenting themselves to its view, and it exults in the conviction, that it is gradually rising in the true dignity of human nature.

To the labouring classes, the pursuit of knowledge answers all the purposes of recreation, and it is a recreation as innocent as it is agreeable: and indeed, so far as its objects are really important, it is attended with a degree of moral pleasure—an article, the absence of which forms a serious drawback on most amusements. But from all these pleasures an unlettered man is wholly debarred; and in default of them, he is often led to indulge in such pleasures as are sensual, and which consequently at once corrupt the heart and debase the intellect. Other expedients are resorted to, to fill up the chasm of business, which are idle, foolish, or absolutely vicious. The understanding is immured in darkness, bewildered in error, cramped with bigotry, and scared with superstition. While others are expatiating in the illumined fields of science, he is groping in a miserable dungeon;—while the scholar exults in the conscious dignity of an intelligent being, he bows under the galling yoke of real inferiority.

As ignorance thus shuts a person out from the noblest pleasures of rational beings; it also deprives him of the most effectual means of being useful to others. None can give that which he does not himself possess. An uneducated man may benefit the bodies of his fellow-creatures, by the strength of his limbs, or the produce of his fields; but to their intellectual pleasure or improvement, he can directly contribute nothing. He may maintain his

family in external splendour and luxury; but he cannot feed them with wisdom and knowledge, or give them intellectual grandeur. From every influential station, and every office, the duties of which have a powerful bearing on the highest interests of man, he is necessarily excluded. And even the productions of his hands as a craftsman or mechanic, have less value in proportion to his deficiency in skill. He who is unacquainted with the philosophy of his art, has a bad chance of being practically acute, and scarcely any at all of being an improver in it. And while this is a disadvantage to the public, it is equally detrimental to his own temporal interest. And finally, an ignorant person, while he is incapable of doing much good, has the power and often the inclination to do abundance of mischief.

But besides these general evils arising from ignorance, certain disadvantages of a more specific character present themselves to our notice. It is the source of many crimes. We mean that it affords internal facilities for the commission of crimes, as natural darkness affords those that are external. It is admitted that crimes may be committed in the clear view of their turpitude and mischief. Nevertheless, in thousands of cases, the knowledge of consequences lays an effectual restraint on criminal inclinations. It is not meant that knowledge of any sort or of any degree is sufficient of itself to make a man uniformly virtuous or always to control his vicious passions—divine grace alone is ade-

quate to that; but we affirm that useful knowledge, and especially moral and religious knowledge, both in its acquirement and possession, has very much this tendency, and is the principal means or medium through which divine influence is communicated.

The passions may indeed be so rebellious as to disobey the strongest understanding; but the same passions, if entirely uncontrolled by reason, would be still more violent in their ebullitions. If passion often goes astray when under the guidance of reason, it will *invariably* do so when left to its own blindness. And upon the whole, though knowledge is by no means sufficient on all occasions to prevent crime, yet it generally causes it to assume a less fatal and disgusting character.

It must not be forgotten also, that the very exertion which is required for the attainment of knowledge, tends to check the growth of those bad passions which excite to the perpetration of crimes. It occupies leisure, and therefore prevents idleness. It provides amusement and pleasure, and consequently supersedes those that are vain and corrupting. And, in a word, it strongly tends to make men more cautious and reflecting—habits decidedly unfavourable to the commission of crime.

The doctrine advanced in these remarks is verified by facts. Nine-tenths of the inmates of our prisons, are persons either wholly, or in a great measure, without education. And though poverty, as

well as ignorance, has its share in the production of crime; yet the latter is decidedly the more powerful cause.

From the preceding observations, it is clear that popular ignorance must be a national calamity; and that it is so, may be rendered still more manifest. It can be shewn to have a strong tendency to originate and foster disaffected feelings and actual sedition. Among the motives which lead some to adopt seditious opinions, and others to act upon them, are, love of distinction, restless and morbid desire of change, and the base selfishness which would welcome public calamities from the prospect of individual advantage. Yet these motives are generally more or less grafted on the stamina of ignorance—ignorance of the institutions to be overthrown, equally so of the system to be established, and its probable results, and not understanding their own theory, they are little able to foresee or calculate its practical working. A person entirely uninstructed may be a loyal subject and a useful citizen, through the influence of religious feelings, and a naturally peaceable and timid disposition; but he can hardly be said to be so from *principle*, unless from the principle of selfishness.

If such be the extent of the mischief of popular ignorance, then certainly to attempt its removal, or at least its abatement, is the duty of all who possess the power of doing so. And much has already been done. The diffusion of useful knowledge a-

mong the middle and lower ranks of society is an object which, of late years, has engaged considerable attention; and by many benevolent and enlightened characters, various means have been adopted, and strenuous efforts made for its attainment. Books have been multiplied, cheapened, and adapted to the humblest capacity. Education, which had been only accessible to the rich, has, to a considerable extent, been brought within the reach of the poor. Science has left her recesses, and, divested of her academic pomp, has condescended to itinerate among the people; while she has exchanged her scholastic language for a more simple and popular dialect. Philosophers have been seen striving, not to hide their conceptions in a cloud of metaphysical refinement, but to place them in the day-light of common sense—not to soar if possible above the learned, but to descend to the most illiterate capacity.

In this general endeavour to remove popular ignorance, different motives, it is probable, actuate many of the individuals thus engaged. The mere scholar may be chiefly anxious, that the common people should taste the pleasures and advantages of science. The statesman seeks the same object in order to the prevention of crime, as well as from the belief, that it is both more honourable and more easy to rule an enlightened, than an ignorant people. The pious man wishes the expulsion of ignorance, as one of the greatest obstructions to the progress of Christianity.

And it must here be observed, that in the great work of imparting information to the poor, much is accomplished by the institutions and services of religion. For though it is not the principal object of the Christian Ministry, to disseminate philosophical knowledge; yet much of the truest and most important philosophy is learned by those who are regular and attentive hearers of an enlightened ministry. Sunday schools too, contribute extensively to the same purpose. It is true, in those seminaries, the simplest rudiments of knowledge only are taught; but then it is to be remembered, that, with these elements of learning the child often acquires, at the same time, a taste for books and mental pursuits; and, what is of more value, so much moral and religious feeling, as gives its literary taste a right direction. Many a distinguished character owes his distinction to a Sunday School; not because he there became learned, but because he there received an impulse, intellectual and religious, the force of which he has felt throughout his whole life, and by which he was first induced to try the effects of self-education.

And it is clear, that the most effectual expedient for the removal of popular ignorance, is the communication of a desire for learning to the poor, and thereby inducing them to apply themselves to the business of self-education. To give cheapness and simplicity to literature, and thereby to bring its streams to the very dwellings of the people, is un-

questionably an important matter; but it is a matter both more important and more difficult to convince them of the value of what is thus within their reach, and to give them a relish for the inspiring stream. Certainly, if any very considerable improvement take place among the lower orders, in point of intelligence, it must be chiefly by means of self-education. The learning usually received by the children of the labouring classes, is extremely limited; and if it were more abundant, it would only lay the foundation—the superstructure would remain to be erected by themselves in after life. It is true, when the principles of science are ingrafted in the mind in early life, the work of self-cultivation is by that means greatly facilitated: but an early education is principally valuable from its tendency to generate a taste for intellectual pursuits; which is, in fact, the grand spring of all endeavours to cultivate the mind.

Unhappily the majority of the lower, and perhaps of the middle classes also of society, are not more destitute of learning, than they are of the desire for its attainment. The mind is not only enfeebled for want of its proper aliment, but it wants the appetite to receive that aliment. Before such persons it would be useless to spread a sumptuous banquet: they want medicine before they can partake of food. The intellectual faculty wants rousing from its lethargy, by the application of stimulants.

This is the business we have proposed to our-

selves in the present work. To the characters above described, we chiefly direct our observations. In order to induce them to commence the work of self-cultivation, we would represent to them the disadvantages, degradation, and mischief of ignorance, the dignity and practical value of useful knowledge, and the possibility of its attainment, even by those who can devote but an hour or two in the day to the work. We would assure such persons, that they cannot justly charge their ignorance upon their external disabilities: for with a proper value for learning, and a strong conviction that the cultivation of the mind ranks among their most solemn duties and loftiest privileges, they would be supplied with an impulse that would overbear every external difficulty.

But though our medicaments seem to be potent, we know too well the kind of subjects on which they are to operate to be very sanguine in our anticipations of success. To give strength and symmetry to limbs which are deformed by long continuance in improper positions, would scarcely be a more difficult task than to give vigour and activity to minds which have been dormant for many years, or only occupied with trifling matters. The condition of such a mind is abject indeed. Totally ignorant of science, it sees not its grandeur and beauty, and consequently feels no desire for its attainment. Some of the noblest productions of genius, it would regard as mere trifles, or at most, view them with

childish amazement; while many of the facts ascertained by mathematical and chemical operations, it would reject as fabulous impositions. To such a person, learning in general seems to be placed at an inaccessible distance, and it would appear as easy for a cripple to run a race as for him to become learned.

Many obstacles to self-education arise also from moral causes. There is indolence in the way: for to one who has been accustomed to spend his evenings in drowsy inactivity, or convivial amusements, it would seem an intolerable hardship to employ the same time in close mental application. Pride is also too often found to oppose a considerable barrier; for pride is the usual associate of ignorance. Many very ignorant people think themselves so eminently wise, that they would be offended if exhorted to improve their minds.\*

Now though we dare not hope that our arguments will be very effectual with such persons, yet with some they may prevail; and if only a few are induced by reading these pages to commence in good earnest the work of self-education, the labour of writing them will not be regretted.

\* "I once," said a minister, "recommended a dictionary to a young man who had been educated at a Sunday School, but he replied, 'thank God, my education has been such that I have no need of a dictionary.'"

## CHAPTER II.

### USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

IGNORANCE has its advocates among protestants as well as among the believers in transubstantiation : if these imagine it to be the mother of devotion, the other suppose it to be the mother of contentment and submission, and therefore a condition most suitable for the humbler classes of society. From such persons, therefore, we cannot expect a welcome reception to the views and recommendations contained in these pages. With such objectors we purpose arguing the case more at large by and by. For the present our answer shall be a brief exposition of those attainments which all among the lower orders we think would be the better for possessing.

History reports, that a certain Lacedemonian king being asked what he would have children to learn, replied, "That which they have most need to practice when they become men."

This sentiment contains the most important

maxim connected with the subject of education; a maxim, however, too often lost sight of to the great misfortune of thousands. It is obvious that knowledge of every kind must derive its principal value from its practical utility. Some sciences or branches of knowledge, are universally important; because they relate to objects which all are interested to know, or to duties which all are bound to perform. The value of others is relative and partial according to their adaptation to the peculiarities of our condition. We are not however so rigid in our utilitarianism, as to despise every mental acquisition which does nothing more than merely gratify the intellectual taste. But as those who are obliged to give the principal part of their time to business must limit themselves to a very narrow field, it would clearly be unwise for such persons to wander far from the principle of utility in their pursuit of knowledge.

In seeking the improvement of the mind, every one ought to consider himself in the three-fold capacity of a christian, a man of business, and a social being; and whatever information may be most useful to him in these several capacities, he should labour in the first place to acquire. Religious, or moral truth, is obviously the most essential and deeply important to man, and is that which ought to be recommended to all, as most proper to engage their earliest and warmest pursuits.

By religious truth, is meant the knowledge of those things which are proper to man as a moral agent and an immortal being. This includes an acquaintance with God in his sublime perfections, glorious works, overruling providence, and righteous laws; and with man as a rational, accountable, degenerate, and redeemed creature. Moral truth comprehends all the affections and duties we owe to our Creator, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves; with all the motives to the exercise of these affections and duties, arising from our obligations to, and dependence upon God, and the present and everlasting consequences of obedience or disobedience, both to ourselves and others. It relates especially to the great doctrines of Redemption: namely, the divine character and vicarious sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ; the free justification of the sinner by faith in his atonement; the person and godhead of the Holy Spirit, with his influences and work on the human heart. Religious knowledge also comprehends an acquaintance with the deceitfulness of the heart, and the devices of Satan; the hostile influence of worldly pleasure, honour, and wealth on personal religion; and the necessity of continual prayer, self-denial and vigilance. To these truths must be added the supreme value of time, the frailty and brevity of life; the solemn transactions and irrevocable awards of the judgment day; the eternal felicities of heaven, and the equally eternal torments of hell. These

may be called the great principles of religion; but there are several other matters which, though of unequal importance to those already mentioned, every one should strive to be acquainted with; and an acquaintance with which may be truly classed with religious knowledge.

Such are, the creation of the world; the fall of man; the deluge; the several dispensations of religion; namely, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian; the economy of the Jewish church, particularly with reference to its animal sacrifices, and its typical character in general; the constitution of the primitive christian churches; the existence of good and evil angels, with their agency in this lower world.

Among religious truths of this secondary importance, must be ranked the history of the progress of Christianity in the apostolic and succeeding ages, among the various nations of the earth; which is valuable, as it shews the power of divine grace in giving fortitude, consolation, and joy, in the midst of the most ignominious and bitter sufferings that persecuting malice could invent, and in the melancholy confirmation thus supplied by the conduct of persecutors, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."

As the Holy Scriptures are the original source of divine knowledge, the most direct way of obtaining that knowledge is by reading the Scriptures. Every person who can, ought also to avail himself

of the instructions of a living ministry of the gospel, in order to be assisted to perceive more clearly the evidence, nature, and importance of revealed truth. God has revealed his character also in his works and providence, as well as in his word; the structure and economy of the various orders of created beings in the animal, vegetable, and rational kingdom, and the providence constantly displayed in the support and preservation of each, declare his wisdom and goodness, "his eternal power and godhead." While the diseases and miseries to which all living beings are subject, and the many disorders observable in the natural world, shew the ravages of sin, and the anger of a just, holy, and insulted Deity.

As religious knowledge is universally important, so we are happy to say that, in this country, it is universally attainable. It would be difficult in this kingdom, to find an individual, however humble his condition, or oppressive his business, that has not the means, not only of becoming wise unto salvation, but of acquiring that comprehensive knowledge of sacred things just described.

A labouring man may now purchase a Bible with the value of one day's earnings; while he either has, or may have been gratuitously taught to read it. Places of worship and religious ordinances are open to the poor as well as the rich; nor does God shew any respect to the outward condition of men in the bestowment either of the gifts of intellect or his Holy Spirit.

To the labouring classes, and to men of business generally, the concern next to religion in importance is the profession or calling by which they may have to earn their subsistence, and maintain themselves and families in comfort and independence. Next therefore to the duty of seeking religious knowledge, is that of acquiring a thorough knowledge of their business. Every attainment that is necessary or contributary to scientific skill and practical dexterity in performing its duties, they should assiduously seek. In the selection of a business, judgment and deliberation ought to be exercised: it is highly desirable that a youth should be placed in a profession congenial to his peculiar genius or turn of mind. If a young man however think he has reason to regret that this has not been attended to in his own case, he should recollect that circumstances sometimes render such an adaptation very difficult, if not impracticable. We would earnestly dissuade him from cherishing disgust or discontented feelings; and venture to affirm, that if he would magnanimously resolve to lay aside his prejudices—which possibly have not their foundation in reason, but in mere whim or childish aversion—he would most probably soon find his inclinations and his business to be on better terms than he had anticipated; and perhaps in the end have reason to believe, that a gracious Providence was concerned in fixing him in the sphere of life in which he moves.

To every young man who is entering on active life and real business, we would say, Let it be your strong and abiding determination to become master of your art or calling, whatever it may be. Study it deeply, and in all its branches. Resolve to be ignorant of nothing that pertains to it. Strive to acquire dispatch with cleverness in performing all its duties, from the most trivial to the most momentous. This habit you will not fail to acquire, if you make it a rule to do every thing in the best and quickest way you possibly can. Many a bungling good-for-nothing workman has become such, not for want of capacity, but for want of a desire to excel, which has led him to contract the habit of doing every thing in a careless, slovenly manner. But be not satisfied with learning your business by rote, and of attaining that manual dexterity which careful practice will insure. Endeavour to form comprehensive views of the nature of your profession. Examine and become familiar with the scientific principles on which it is founded. This will teach you the best method of conducting the operative part of it; it will enable you to account for strange appearances, and to deal with new cases, which, if you are ignorant, would be inexplicable and embarrassing. And there is scarcely any department of manual occupation, however mean, which does not involve philosophical principles, the knowledge of which it is therefore the interest of all workmen to obtain. To how many workmen must the know-

ledge of Mechanical Philosophy be useful, and to how many others does Chemistry prove almost necessary. Every one must with a glance perceive, that to engineers, watch makers, instrument makers, bleachers and dyers, those sciences are most useful, if not necessary. But carpenters and masons are surely likely to do their work better for knowing how to measure, which practical mathematics teaches them, and how to estimate the strength of timber, of walls, and of arches, which they learn from practical mechanics; and they who work in various metals, are certain to be the more skilful in their trades for knowing the nature of those substances, and their relation to both heat and other metals, and to the airs and liquids they come in contact with. Nay the farm servant and day labourer, whether in his master's employ or tending the concerns of his own cottage, must derive great practical benefit—must be both a better servant, and a more thrifty and therefore comfortable cottager for knowing something of the nature of soils and manures, which Chemistry teaches; and something of the habits of animals, and the qualities and the growth of plants, which he learns from Natural History and Chemistry together. In truth, though a man be neither a mechanic nor peasant, but only having a pot to boil, he is sure to learn from science, lessons which will enable him to cook his morsel better, save his fuel, and both vary his dish and improve it. The art of good and cheap cookery is intimately

connected with the principles of chemical philosophy, and has received much, and will yet receive more improvement from their application."

In those callings which are denominated trades, there is not indeed much place for philosophical knowledge; but there is sufficient to exercise the intellect. For besides the necessity of persons thus employed being acquainted with the laws and usages of commerce and mercantile transactions, a sound and discriminating judgment is peculiarly necessary in buying and selling. As the skill of a physician chiefly consists in ascertaining the precise nature of a disorder from the symptoms it presents, and as this skill cannot be acquired without diligent and extensive observation; in like manner the cleverness of a tradesman chiefly consists in being able quickly and correctly to perceive the value of the articles in which he traffics; nor can this acuteness be obtained without vigilant attention, or in other words, without considerable mental exertion.

Now this philosophical knowledge of a man's proper business, and superior skill in its performance, is recommended by the strongest motives. It is not only honourable to the character, and a duty which we owe to God, to our families, and to the public at large; but it is intimately connected with, and even essential to our temporal comfort and prosperity. The labour of the commonest workmen who is clever and ingenious, will be more

valuable, and of course, command a higher price than that of a bungler; and if such a person unite integrity with his superior skill, he will rarely fail of rising above the grade of a servant. In every mechanical art, and in all the departments of traffic, not to mention the learned professions, no encouragement or success can be expected, if there be ignorance of the principles, and awkwardness in their application to practical purposes.

Upon the whole, we may observe, that a man who is ignorant or unskilful in the business by which he earns his bread, whatever learning he may possess besides, can by no means be said to be a wise or sensible person. He who makes his business his study, and excels in that, is worth a hundred philosophers whose acquisitions are never turned to any practical account. We would therefore warn the reader against despising his calling, under the idea that it is unworthy of his intellectual powers, and of turning his attention to other pursuits, and to those branches of literature which are unlikely to yield him any profit. Perhaps that which he despises involves philosophical principles of which he is ignorant; and it is more than probable that if he ever be placed in comfortable circumstances, or rise to affluence, it will be by means of his proper business.

Among the attainments necessary, or very useful to the execution of most kinds of business are those of reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar.

No persons, whatever be their sex or condition, ought to be ignorant of these arts: they are equally important as the elements of all kinds of learning, and as the means by which all kinds of business are facilitated; and while they constitute some of the finest accomplishments of a gentleman, they are within the reach of the commonest labourer.

Among the lower orders, there are not many to the present day who are unable to read, but comparatively few of such persons who can read *well*. The principal faults in reading are unnatural tones, with improper rapidity and disregard of pauses. Any one might convince himself of the absurdity of the stiff, monotonous, and awkward tones with which common people in general read, by trying to converse in similar tones. Let him speak to another person on an ordinary subject with the disagreeable inflexion of voice, and the same impropriety in the application of emphasis and pauses, which he probably does in reading, and he would find himself perfectly ridiculous, perhaps unintelligible: but the absurdity is quite as great in one case as in the other. In conversation our tones are easy and significant; we naturally adapt them to our subject; we make them expressive of fear, grief, anger, love, and every other passion. If we ask a question the person to whom we speak would know that he was interrogated, although he had not distinctly caught our words.

If we receive an answer, we might distinguish denial from assent from the tones of the speaker. Now all that is necessary in order to read with propriety, is, to use the same tones as we do in earnest conversation. The reason why we converse in an agreeable manner is, because we are usually in earnest; we feel what we speak; we follow nature, and use the tones which genuine emotion suggests. Now if we would do the same in reading; if we would enter into the sense and feeling of the writer, our reading would be as agreeable and as graceful as our conversation. Stubborn habits, however, are not abandoned without difficulty; but a good method of reading is so very pleasing, and so very useful an accomplishment, that it is worth while to make the attempt; and any person who will attend to these suggestions, and accustoms himself first in private to read in a proper time, and with the proper emphasis, will soon find the difficulty to vanish.

Correct pronunciation is an essential property of good reading; and this any one may acquire by the aid of a dictionary, and by a careful attention to good speakers.

Neat and elegant penmanship is an attainment truly respectable, and one also as useful as it is respectable. To many thousands it has proved highly beneficial as a passport to lucrative situations, which they would otherwise have been incapable of fulfilling. Every person therefore who has a

hand to hold a pen, should endeavor to make himself master of this fine art. In order to this, learn to make a good pen: much depends upon this. Furnish yourself with good models, and whether you write little or much, always write as well as you can: by these means you will rapidly improve, and by moderate but persevering practice, you will soon write a neat and even tasteful hand. Extensive practice is one means of becoming a good penman; but this will not suffice without care: we have seen bad writing executed by men who have had extensive practice. Indeed among the respectable classes, good penmanship is most unseasonably neglected, and even despised. Not long ago we were shewn a letter written by a member of parliament, but so wretchedly executed, that not one sentence, or even *one word*, could we faintly make out in the whole of a pretty long letter.

Arithmetic, or the science of numbers and the art of computation, next claims our consideration. It would be almost superfluous to attempt to shew the utility of this branch of knowledge. Indeed, it is not only useful, but absolutely indispensable in almost every transaction of life, more especially in all pecuniary transactions. Every man in business has calculations sometimes to make, which he cannot very well perform without some knowledge of accounts; and the most ordinary labourer would find it most useful in the computation and expenditure of his wages. Every young man, therefore,

whatever may be his business or prospects in life, we would most strongly urge him to obtain a knowledge of Arithmetic. If you have never learnt at school, begin immediately to teach it to yourself: this you may accomplish by the aid of a Key; and if you can also secure the aid of a living instructor, avail yourself of it. Never imagine yourself qualified to conduct any kind of business in which calculations are concerned, without some knowledge of this art. If you have learnt it in your school-boy days, take the earliest opportunity of carefully going over its rules again, and study them till they are perfectly familiar to you.

English Grammar is highly proper to engage the attention of working people. A grammar is a systematic collection of those principles or laws by which our written and spoken language is regulated. It treats of the nature and powers of letters, and the just method of spelling and pronouncing words. It distributes words into those several classes called parts of speech; teaches the proper method of arranging words in a sentence, and prescribes rules for pointing, pauses, tones, emphasis, and versification. All these matters it arranges under four general heads; namely, Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody. No person certainly can pretend to be educated who is ignorant of grammar. A philosophical acquaintance with the English language, is far more than a mere accomplishment; it is decidedly useful. Without

it, a man is neither fit to write a letter nor mix in good company. Perhaps all our young readers are sensible of the charms of politeness; but so far as politeness depends on good speaking, a knowledge of grammar is essential to it. By mixing in good company, your manners and speaking may acquire a sort of polish; but if you are ignorant of grammar, yours will only be the politeness of a footman; you will constantly be committing errors in your speech, unperceived indeed by the vulgar, but such as will make you contemptible to the educated: and if you have any sensibility about you, you cannot but labour under a perpetual dread of exposing yourself. By success in business you may possibly rise in civil importance, and be introduced into respectable society, but the illiterateness of your dialect will always betray your plebian origin. A knowledge of grammar is more necessary to correct writing than conversation. Most of the customary forms of polite conversation may be learned by rote, but the style of a letter ought to be different from the disjointed, illiptical, and ejaculatory style of colloquial intercourse: there should be more variety in the words, more length in the sentences, and, in fact, more of the dignity of composition. But if you are ignorant of the rules of composition, not to mention spelling, it will be impossible for you to pen a correct letter. And the finest penmanship cannot atone for bad spelling and blundering grammar. A man who writes a

good hand, but is unskillful in composition, appears to be more advantage than a rustic dressed in the faery of a gentleman; but when the writing and the inking are equally bad; when a scrawling epistle is wretched in point of sense, and despicable in language, it is disgraceful in a high degree to its author. On the other hand, few things are more creditable, or exhibit a person to more advantage, than a letter written in a beautiful hand, and couched in a neat and accurate style. The writer of such a letter, however humble his condition may be, will always be regarded as a superior character by all sensible people.

To the rudimental attainments now under consideration, must be added some knowledge of political philosophy and of English jurisprudence: this is an essential constituent of a well-informed person, and should be sought, not merely for the sake of the reputation of being intelligent, but for the more substantial purpose of regulating the conduct as members of civil society. We certainly have no desire that ordinary people should make law any more than make physic their particular study; for a dabbler in law and a quack in medicine occupy about the same elevation in the scale of public opinion. Nevertheless it is desirable that every person should understand the general principles of medicine, especially as relates to the preservation of health; for in the want of this, many of those indiscretions have their origin, by which thousands ruin their

health or shorten their lives. And the general principles of law—which it is the object of political philosophy to unfold—is an acquisition equally desirable. To this must be added a knowledge of those particular enactments which regulate our duty and interest. As for instance, the laws which settle the rights of property, and those by which commercial transactions are governed; the law of landlord and tenant, and such also as relate to the duty of parish officers, and parish affairs in general. Thousands of practical mistakes, many of them of serious consequence, would be avoided, if people would be at the pains to devote a little time to this subject. Invasions of rights as unjust as they are illegal, and litigations equally impoverishing and vexatious, owe their existence in numberless cases solely to ignorance of the law, and of the proper course to be followed in such matters. But besides these particular studies, that general knowledge which is obtained by reading is highly desirable. A judicious course of reading should accompany the studies already recommended. And suppose you can only devote half-an-hour in the day to this employment, yet in that time you might read a few pages or a chapter; and though by this means you should only be able to finish a volume in a month, yet consider what a large stock of information even this slow process would enable you to acquire in the course of a few years. On this sparing diet the intellect would subsist, and even thrive, providing

the aliment was good, and well digested by careful thought.

Of the acquisition of religious knowledge, we have already shewn the duty and importance: but we trust it will not be necessary to apologize for again recalling the subject to the reader's attention. The Bible should have a sovereign preference to all other books: it would be the greatest calamity, if any kind of reading should lead to the neglect of this precious volume. Many good men have imposed it upon themselves as a duty to read so much of the Scriptures every day, as would enable them to go through the whole every year. We would warmly recommend a similar practice to every one of our readers. If ever you discover that your delight in reading the Bible is in any measure yielding to your love of general reading, immediately believe yourself to be falling into a fearful snare, and let it be your earnest endeavour to escape before you are irretrievably entangled. We dwell upon this subject with strong feeling, aware that a person who has an intense thirst for learning, is in extreme danger of permitting his relish for religious knowledge and experience to be impaired by his too ardent pursuit of general literature.

Some of the greatest scholars that ever lived, have been known towards the close of life to relinquish almost every kind of literature and reading for the sake of solely studying the Holy Scriptures. As eternity opened upon them, they discovered the

comparative insignificance of all human learning, and that the great truths of Revelation were the only food and support of their immortal spirits. We would wish every scholar both in health and sickness, to possess so much of these impressions as to induce him, not indeed to renounce his ordinary studies, but to attach to the Bible a paramount importance. Most people can command a few hours on the Sabbath-day for reading; this time should be devoted to the pursuit of religious knowledge, in reading the Bible, and other devotional and theological works.

History should be read. This is both highly entertaining reading, and it is fraught with great practical instruction. All history teaches that virtue is the great source of national strength and happiness; and that pride, ambition, and voluptuousness as surely prove the ruin of nations as of individuals. Among the characters that are exhibited on the theatre of history, we are shocked to find how few of them are thoroughly good; how many are vile; and what numbers are desperately wicked. Crime is the most prominent object in all history. In the convulsions which from time to time have agitated society, and the miseries resulting from the ebullition of bad passions, we have awful proofs of the ravages of sin, and the depth of human depravity. History also bears decisive evidence to the value of Christianity in its civil and national influence. It exhibits it as giving integrity to rulers, equity to

law, and humanity to punishment, and even in depriving war of much of its ferocity; while it shews a thousand philanthropic institutions as the offspring of christian feeling.

Read also biography, or the memoirs of those individuals distinguished for piety, talent, or public usefulness. No species of composition operates at once so powerfully and so beneficially on the morals of readers as biography. Virtue or talent contemplated in the abstract, or seen in some eminent individual, are indeed delightful and dignified objects; but then, when so viewed, they very much tend to produce a despair of attainment. We are affected by the sight of their great distance from us, and do not clearly see the path-way across the gulf between; but this heartless feeling is usually removed when we can read the private history of the individual. We can here trace the steps by which he has reached his eminence; we perceive that he has not performed his long journey by sudden and miraculous flight, but by a thousand short and gentle movements, such as we ourselves could make.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the memoirs of extraordinary characters only are worth reading. The truth is, *that* biography is the most edifying, and often even the most pleasing, which treats of beings of nearly the same order as ourselves, who have started from nearly the same point, combated similar difficulties, and won victories which it is not extravagant to expect to win ourselves:

the impression communicated by such histories is, not the excitement produced by what is impassioned, or of wonder by what is marvellous—it is an impression which comes home to our business and besom, and touches the main spring of virtue action.

Ecclesiastical history presents an interesting field of knowledge to the christian. In ordinary affairs people are curious and eager to receive information respecting those matters in which their temporal interest is involved. If you had a friend whom you greatly valued, you would listen with peculiar satisfaction to the details of his history. You would not think it uninteresting to be told of his ancestry, connections, and the circumstances of his past life. Now as Christianity is incomparably the most important object to every christian, inasmuch as it is essential to his highest happiness, nothing that relates to its history ought to be uninteresting to him; he should feel the greatest eagerness to be acquainted with the history of its progress and treatment in different ages and among different nations; its struggles and triumphs, its revivals and declensions. We repeat it that this *ought* to be the feeling of christians relative to the history of their religion; and it is very certain that the absence of such a feeling can only be resolved into the total absence of a taste for reading, or to a criminal lukewarmness in the cause of christianity. One circumstance attested by all church history

strikingly demonstrates its celestial origin and nature—persecution, has almost invariably tended to its advantage: always with regard to the purity of its professors, and often with regard to numbers also, while it has never failed to decline in proportion to the merely secular honours and support it has received; thus verifying the assertion of its great Author, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

Geography and natural history are highly proper subjects for general reading. To be acquainted with the earth on which we live, in the variety of its soils and climates, its curiosities and wonders—with the habits, customs, and peculiarities of the different nations and tribes of the human family, and with the diversified species of animals, plants, and minerals, must needs be both interesting and useful. It is equally interesting to learn the philosophy of nature’s great agents, or the chief properties and effects of light, heat, air, water, electricity, and magnetism. The earth and the works therein were designed by its great Creator, not merely for the use and accommodation of man, but for the display of his own glory to his intelligent creation. It must therefore be the will of God, that the wonders of his creative hand should be carefully and studiously examined by man, and it is only by earnest attention that the manifold wisdom displayed therein can be discerned. Those therefore who have no taste for natural history and are unobservant of its striking phenomena, betray

not only a grovelling intellect, but a heart devoid of the noblest sentiments of piety: they throw contempt on the Almighty, who has exhibited his character in his works purposely for man's inspection, while they do not think it worth while to look at it. To be regardless of the creative and providential manifestations of the Divine character, is a sin of exactly the same kind as to refuse to read his written revelation.

In our enumeration of subjects for reading, *select* poetry certainly deserves to hold a place. Poetry is considered a sort of literary amusement; and in this view it is highly worthy the attention of those who devote considerable time to severer studies; scarcely any thing will be found so effectually to sooth and delight the mind, and consequently to prepare it for harder labour: but it rests stronger claims on the ground of utility—it is often highly instructive—the noblest truths and loftiest thoughts are often conveyed in poetry, and the fancy dress in which they are attired, renders them peculiarly agreeable to all, and often wins them admission to minds otherwise inaccessible to truth. If poetry does not greatly improve the judgment, it is calculated to refine the taste, and to expand and elevate the affections. By the variety and splendour of its imagery, it enlarges the range of our imagination, while the uncommon care which poets exercise in the choice of words, renders their productions very proper to increase our command of language.

These remarks are of course intended to apply to the superior class of poets only; for there is probably a larger proportion of foolish and trifling poetry than of any other kind of composition, and consequently in no department of reading is greater care in selection requisite.

We were about to exhibit some other views of the intellectual course which we could wish our young reader to pursue, but we have been arrested by the impression, that possibly some of them will be inclined to say, "It is enough; you have already shewn us more of the road than we shall ever be able to travel; you have conducted our imagination to a point which we dare not hope to reach, and have imposed upon us tasks, which, unless we had more time and external advantages, will exceed our ability of performance." Presuming that this artless feeling is actually entertained by some, we cannot dismiss this part of the subject without an attempt to remove it.

Look at that stupendous building. Perhaps in your childish days, you could not well imagine how such a mighty structure could be reared by human hands; but no sooner did you come to understand the gradual process of building, than all your childish amazement ceased: you now know that the foundation was first laid, and each stone separately squared and formed, and then one by one placed upon the pile, until at length, the last stone was laid, and the last stroke given, and the gigantic

edifice was completed. Thus what could not be accomplished by any brief effort, however powerful, has been easily effected by patient labour, continued for a certain number of years. Now by the same means, that is, by patient and regular effort, prolonged from year to year, you also may rear a goodly fabric of knowledge, and one which in the course of time, may present an appearance equally rich and imposing. If you commence with first principles, abstain from grasping at too much at once, and endeavour to master one thing before you attempt another; and if you acquire the habit of redeeming your scraps of time by regular, patient, and persevering effort, you will soon discover that what was formidable and embarrassing, when viewed in a mass, is perfectly simple, and easily surmountable, when fairly analyzed and encountered in separate parcels.

The studies we have recommended are mere rudiments, and insignificant in comparison with the attainments of many self-educated men. And we are persuaded, that if you should have resolution and perseverance to tread the path we have pointed out, you would among other things acquire such a conviction of the value of learning, with such a relish for scientific pursuits, that nothing would be farther from your thoughts than to discontinue your studies. He who is a diligent student in his teens, will generally remain such throughout life.

Perhaps you are an apprentice; and if so, it is

pretty certain that your spare time will be very limited; and yet we will venture to affirm, that if the small pittance you have be carefully and judiciously employed in the cultivation of your mind, it would enable you to accomplish all that we have prescribed in a period of time not exceeding that which is required for learning your trade. And think how gratifying it must be, if at the expiration of your apprenticeship you found that you had not only learned a trade, but had become a proficient in some of the most useful branches of learning and accomplishments—that your reading and writing were, pleasing and elegant, and your skill in accounts, grammar, and general knowledge, worthy, even of a scholar. We venture to affirm that those attainments would invest your character with a considerable measure of respectability; and you would find them not merely respectable, but really useful: They would enable you to transact your business with more ease and effect than you otherwise could. And suppose some disease or misfortune should disable you for the manual labour required by your business—a circumstance of no rare occurrence—you would then most probably find your learning eminently valuable, by its fitting you for some office in which muscular exertion was unrequired.

## CHAPTER III.

### MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT.

THE smooth and measured turnpike road of academic tuition is not the only path to intellectual superiority. There are other ways of reaching the same object, less direct and expeditious certainly: a kind of moor-land route, presenting all the variety and inconvenience of the dark valley, the frowning mountain, or the trackless waste. Yet in these solitary paths, thousands have walked with steady pace, accomplishing the very objects for which colleges have been reared and professors paid.

Our present purpose is to treat of the principal means of improvement available to those who have to educate themselves. Of these the following are the most important: namely, Observation, Reading, Discourse, or Oral Instruction, and Study. These may be considered as so many avenues or inlets into the field of science.

The most direct and simple of these ways, is Observation: This is also a *common* path; since, generally speaking, it lies open to all. Every man,

however narrow may be the sphere in which he moves, is necessarily conversant with some department of the natural world; and many of the ordinary occupations afford remarkable facilities for the attainment of knowledge by observation, placing men in immediate contact with a vast variety of objects, and bringing under their constant notice, some of the nicest and most subtle processes of nature. The operatives in many manufactories have an opportunity of witnessing the action of those great physical agents, which generally elude vulgar observation, and the knowledge of which is accounted true philosophy; and of seeing the wonderful application of that scientific genius, which has brought these agents under human control, made them obedient to most intricate laws, and subservient to practical purposes; delicate, complex, and important in the highest degree. Even the tiller of the soil occupies a position, from which he commands an extensive view of the physical world, he has opportunities of acquiring a personal acquaintance with various species of plants and animals, and with numberless facts illustrative of Chemical Science. Laws which many philosophers have deduced from a very few petty experiments, he has verified or disproved by experience of the widest extent. The foreign merchant, the sailor, and the traveller, are situated still more favourably for acquiring knowledge by observation: they see the world on a large scale, are perpetually encountering

new objects and appearances, and may therefore amass a large store of curious and useful information. And even the humble craftsman, who rarely travels beyond the precincts of his native village, and not often out of his workshop, may, by inspecting his own heart and character, and that sample of his fellow creatures which he finds in his own neighbourhood, obtain a pretty extensive knowledge of human nature.

In order to realize the advantages of observation as a means of acquiring knowledge, the following hints will perhaps be found useful.

1. Regard the improvement of your mind as part of your daily business and study; and in the midst of all your other engagements, let this object invariably be kept in view. Suffer no object or phenomenon to escape your notice and examination as far as you have opportunity, and account that day unprofitably spent, in which observation and experience have added nothing to your stores of knowledge.

If you are engaged in country employments, study the nature, powers, and comparative value of the different soils and manures with which you are conversant: attentively notice every species of grain and vegetable which grows in your fields and gardens; study their structure and use, and the best means of promoting their growth and preserving them from reptiles and diseases: and let not the

charge of *whimsical*, which your ignorant neighbours may possibly prefer against you, prevent you from trying experiments on a small scale, which you may generally do without any pecuniary disadvantage, and often with great ultimate profit. Regard the different species of animals under your care with peculiar attention: observe their structure and habits, ascertain those properties of size, figure, action, &c., in which their value principally consists. It is this personal attention which is the parent of experience, and which distinguishes the intelligent farmer from the clown; and we recommend it not merely for the honour and pleasure of being wise, but because the wisdom thus acquired is often found to be in a high degree profitable.

If you are engaged in any of those operations, in which the art of man is principally concerned; such as building, or any description of manufacture; not only become familiar with the great principles of the art, but notice any defect in the working or application, and task your invention to find a remedy or an improvement. Inventions and improvements have in most cases been the result of an union of scientific skill with practical attention; seldom of unobservant ignorance.

If business lead you to mix extensively with society, or call you to travel in foreign lands, you will in either case have a noble field of observation. In the former, you may obtain that knowledge of the human world, to which all agree to attach high im-

portance, by attentively, but not *invincibly* scrutinizing the various characters which come under your notice. In the latter you may accumulate an important stock of Geographical knowledge at first hand; and in order to this, learn by diligent inspection and enquiry the peculiarities of soil and climate of the country in which you travel or reside; its natural curiosities, vegetable productions, indigenous animals, and especially the government, habits, manners, customs, and general character of its inhabitants. In one word, whatever other business you are carrying on, incessantly proceed with the great business of mental improvement; ever be on the alert to add to your store of useful knowledge.

It is far from being our intention to recommend such a devotion to scientific observation, as would induce a neglect of business; the truth is, all the observations we have pointed out may be made without any sacrifice of time that would be in the least prejudicial to business.

Opportunities for observation would be useless without this determination to avail ourselves of the advantages they offer; for there are thousands who are not a wit wiser for any opportunities they possess of observing the objects and phenomena around them. Many men have travelled all the world over, and still are clowns; they have had a thousand things under their immediate inspection, of which (with the exception of some of their most obvious properties,) they are nevertheless entirely ignorant.

In order that your observations and experiments may be correctly and successfully prosecuted, and the knowledge thereby attained truly philosophical, avail yourself of all the information you can elicit from those persons who are well informed on the matters which engage your attention, and especially consult authors who have written on such subjects. Observation is not chiefly valuable as an independent source of knowledge, but rather as an illustrative or a confirmatory one. The knowledge obtained by personal inspection is generally striking and satisfactory as far as it goes, but it is always superficial, and often considerably erroneous. By individual investigation a person may indeed obtain a general knowledge of things, and if he have uncommon sagacity, may penetrate considerably beyond the mere surface; but when it is considered, that the stock of human knowledge on every subject of natural philosophy has been receiving constant accessions from the researches of the learned for several centuries past, it will be evident that the solitary observations of an ordinary individual must be of limited value.

Now when you read an able author on any subject of physical science, you have not only the results of his own investigations on the point; but he presents you also with the collective wisdom of the whole learned world. With this therefore in possession, you will be enabled to pursue your own researches with ease, rapidity, and success. It will

furnish you with a light by which you will be enabled clearly to trace effects to their causes, and particular phenomena to those general laws of which they are exemplifications. It is invariably found that the observations of persons who are ignorant of books and the sentiments of the learned, turn to no account: they are often deceived by appearances, and oftener attribute appearances to improper causes: they are, as it were, lost among an heterogeneous mass of particulars, which they are unable either to analyze or classify, and of which they neither know the mutual relations, nor the general laws to which they are subject.

Another method of giving efficiency to observation, as a means of improving the mind in useful knowledge, is that of keeping a diary, or written record of such matters as you may judge worthy of preservation. For want of this, many a man has lost a great part of the fruits of an observant life; and many important facts highly illustrative of science, have through this neglect been suffered to sink into oblivion. If business or curiosity call you to visit foreign countries, make brief memoirs of those characters, occurrences, and objects that fall in your way, which present uncommon or striking properties. If you are engaged in agriculture, or its kindred arts, note down any remarkable appearances, whether they are casual results, or obtained by direct experiment; such, for instance, as may relate to the treatment of cattle, with respect to

breed, growth, or disease; in the effects of certain kinds of manure, or other substances applied to land; of any particular system of tillage. In short, whatever department of active life you are engaged in, practice the method we here recommend. By this means, in a moderate life-time your recorded observations will be considerable, at least in point of bulk; and if you have made them with any degree of judgment or genius, many of them will possess intrinsic value. Perhaps they will bring to light, or materially illustrate some important principles; and, at all events, they will be curious and interesting to yourselves, as the echo of your thoughts long since conceived, or the memory of events and scenes once familiar, but now passed away.

2. Oral instruction is a medium of acquiring knowledge, on which we have proposed to expatiate. This may indeed not be thought to be within our province, as the specific subject of discourse is *self-education*, which necessarily implies the absence of the formal instructions of tutors. We shall, however, be able to shew, that much improvement may be derived even through this channel in indirect ways, by those who do not enjoy the benefit of regular tuition.

So far as religious knowledge is concerned, the public ministry of the Gospel throws this medium of communication equally open to all classes of men. He who regularly sits under an able and

evangelical ministry, need not remain ignorant of any important truth, connected either with religion or morals, although he should never read any book except the Bible. And a preacher, who has that learning and ability which the sacred office demands, will do more than make his hearers wise unto salvation; he will incidently communicate much information on subjects of general knowledge, particularly on matters relating to ancient history and geography, as well as natural philosophy. Purposes of illustration will often lead him to advert to facts drawn from these sources. Now when a person is privileged with the ministrations of a wise preacher, who expends the best part of his wisdom on his hearers, and imparts to them all that is most valuable in his stock of knowledge and experience, it is certainly his own fault if he remain ignorant.

An educated preacher will moreover speak his own language with propriety, and perhaps practically exemplify the rules and beauties of style and elocution; those therefore who are anxious to possess these accomplishments, cannot fail of receiving the most valuable assistance by hearing such preachers.

The serious reader may possibly disrelish the idea of representing the ministry as an auxiliary of mere literature: he may fear that our observations will tend to cherish the profane disposition—too predominant in many—of following popular preach-

ers, chiefly with the view of obtaining literary gratification or improvement. All, however, that we mean to say is, that a person who has a taste for eloquence and classical diction, cannot help deriving improvement in such matters from pulpit eloquence, although such an object does not enter into his motives for attending divine worship.

That it is absolutely improper to allow the wish for mental improvement to have the slightest influence upon us in our attendance at the house of God, we are not prepared to affirm; but, that spiritual edification should be displaced by any consideration whatever from its commanding position as the supreme object of hearing the word, we should deprecate as a fearful evil. The recollection of great personal benefit derived from this source in early life, when few other facilities were within reach, has led us more particularly to dwell upon this point:

Much oral instruction is brought within the reach of the working classes by means of the Mechanics' Institutes, and itinerant lecturers on subjects of philosophy. In almost every considerable town in England, these very popular modes of diffusing scientific knowledge among the operatives, are to be met with; and certainly no one wishing for improvement, will neglect such opportunities. The plain and familiar style adopted in the lecture-room; the opportunity of witnessing experiments and modes of illustrating abstruse subjects, which cannot be resorted to in books, will give to the ideas acqui-

red by reading, vivacity and distinctness, thereby impressing them more durably on the memory.

*Conversation* may be converted into a fruitful source of intellectual improvement; and in most cases it truly needs a *conversion* before it can be fruitful at all; for it has, in no small degree, been made subject to vanity. It is very natural to expect that such conversation should have the effect of brightening our conceptions on any point towards which the attention may have been directed. The co-action of discussion, or the conflict of debate, will bring truths, dimly seen, into clearer light; and refine and mould into the current coin of literature, many ideas which had existed but in the ore.

Some may object, that this great misfortune is, the want of opportunities of enjoying the conversation of those whose attainments are superior to their own. We suspect, that a still greater misfortune of many is, an inaptitude or indisposition to avail themselves of such opportunities as are within their reach. The society of persons capable of instructing us is doubtless highly desirable, but absolute superiority in one party is not essential to improving conversation. However similar in general attainments two or more individuals may be, there will be peculiarities of tact and talent: on some subjects one will be in advance of the rest. Our advice would therefore be, never despise the conversation even of those who are reputed ignorant. Perhaps there are matters on which they are better informed

than yourself. Cultivate the virtue which divines call simplicity : a virtue which is modesty without embarrassment, confidence without affectation, and is alike opposed to the pride which despises the conversation of an inferior, and the meanness which shrinks from your superiors.

It is a common advice, never to be in haste to display your own acquirements; modesty however has its limits. You may probably have more opportunities of communicating than of receiving instruction. Such opportunities must be embraced, and "Teaching, you will learn." That wisdom which teaches the proper seasons to speak or to hear, is desirable in a high degree.

Redeem time from its accustomed insipidity ; we may also add, its accustomed bitterness and poison. We do not say, that conversation is always to be dressed in literary uniform, and scientific stateliness. For every thing there is a season. Atmospheric truisms and village gossip, are not always unseasonable; but he who shall assign to these insipidities no more time than common sense will allow, taking care to shun evil speaking altogether, will have sufficient time for better purposes.

Remember conversation is a talent which proper exercise will improve. There is much inadvertence to this point. A social party meet together without a single thought having been exercised by any one, as to what shall be the subject of conversation. It is no wonder if, in such circumstances,

little advantage is realized. Useful topics may be started by chance; but when the stream of conversation is thus left to take a fortuitous direction, no wonder if it sometimes become stagnant, or take a direction entirely, if not positively mischievous.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT.

We proceed to offer some remarks on *reading* as a mode of obtaining knowledge. In a system of self-education, reading bears a peculiar importance. Books are the main staff of a man who has to instruct himself; and, under any circumstances, reading is the most fertile source of improvement. Even those who command every faculty, cannot dispense with its agency. We may have an opportunity of examining remarkable objects, and of witnessing important experiments and striking appearances; yet we often want those explanations and opportunities of re-examination, which are necessary to give clearness and permanency to our

knowledge. But a writer puts you in possession of his very best and maturest thoughts, the fruits probably of good judgment, profound erudition, and laborious study; and if we fail to apprehend his meaning on the first reading we can give the work a second, or a third perusal. With a good book in our hand, we can reap, in a short time, the fruits of ages of experience and observation.

That which ought first to be attended to in order to realize the benefit of reading, is a judicious selection of books. A book may be considered as a sort of companion; therefore, with the same caution, and by the same rules, must both be chosen. Religious principle you would consider indispensable in the person you select as a companion. A merely negative virtue would not satisfy you; you would require religious conviction and feeling, as the grand substratum of his character. A book ought to have the same recommendation. Every book is dangerous which aims to unsettle our faith, either in the authenticity of the Scriptures, or the truth of any of its doctrines; equally so, those which are the production of polluted feeling or lax morality. And the danger is greatest when the author appears in disguise, professing fairness and candour, and aiming to accomplish his purpose by sly insinuations; by starting objections, which he pretends to be unable satisfactorily to answer. The reader in this case is thrown off his guard, and may be robbed of his faith or his purity before he is aware.

Good sense and good information are properties you would demand in a companion. These two qualities derive their principal value from their union. Good native sense without knowledge is comparatively useless; while the latter, disunited from the former, would make its possessor unamiable or ridiculous. In these essential points, books are, of course, of vastly unequal value; weighed in the balance of average ability, many are found wanting. The author may have selected an interesting subject, and he may possibly have excellent intentions, but fails in execution. Perhaps you perceive that in sentiment he is barren, in argument feeble, while in illustration and arrangement he is unhappy. A good writer is distinguished, not only for the beauty and vigour of his thoughts, but for propriety in the disposition of them. He not only says that which is good in itself, but that which is suitable to the point in hand. But we meet with many who cannot maintain this systematic and consecutive course; they get bewildered among the collateral topics which start up around them, and losing sight of their principal object, their progress is marked with irregularity and confusion.

There are other characteristics which are desirable in a friend, as cheerfulness, humour, the command of anecdote, and, generally, the power of creating amusement. It is in works of imagination that we find these qualities most prominently displayed;

but whether we find them in books or men, they are qualities to be restrained and hallowed by pious feeling and sober judgment. To be gay without being flippant; to produce excitement perfectly free from irregularity, and to make amusements subservient to instruction, are tasks to which but few are competent; yet nothing less can reconcile us to works of fiction.

To this species of composition we profess no hostility in the abstract. Instruction may be communicated in a tale as well as in a sermon, and in this form it may admit of attractions, which however small in real value, may gain it favour with a certain class of readers. Many will not read a book which has the character of seriousness; these must be treated like children whose medicine we conceal in something of inviting taste and appearance. Tales and stories are a kind of literary sweetmeats, indispensable only to baby tastes and pampered appetites.

*Read temperately;* we do not say *idly*: but the memory may receive more than its "full freight" of ideas; it may be fairly sickened and surfeited. There are gluttons in reading as well as in eating. Generally, we would say, be content with one book at a time. Indiscriminate reading is bad; hasty reading completes the absurdity.

*Read carefully.* It may be stated as a general rule, that if a book be worth reading at all, it is worth reading well. Study your author. Strive,

in the first place to comprehend the general design, and the leading particulars, and then the whole detail of argument and illustration.

Lastly; in reading, avoid the two extremes of obstinate adherence to your own views and opinions at all events, and that childish and unwatchful pliability which leaves you at the mercy of every writer who can advance plausible arguments in a confident manner. An opinion carelessly taken up is commonly abandoned with equal indifference. Some people can hardly be said to have any opinions of their own; they are carried about with every wind of doctrine, and often at length settle in downright absurdity.

The last method of improving the mind we propose to notice, is that of *meditation* or *study*. By this means we bring our own understandings to bear on the various objects of knowledge; we recollect, discriminate, combine, compare, and judge. Meditation implies the exercise of the memory in searching for, and recalling the ideas which have been entrusted to its keeping. It implies also the exercise of the judgment in the comparison of new objects with those we have already examined, with a view to determine their properties and relations; and in the application of principles already ascertained to the discovery and verification of others. The exercise of the imagination belongs also to study: by this we discover and frame analogies; that is, we confirm and illustrate moral and abstract

truths by resembling objects and processes supplied by the natural world. Thus the doctrine of the resurrection is both illustrated and accredited by insect transformations, the vernal recuscitation of dormant animals, as well as the annual renewal of vegetation. The ebullition of passion is illustrated by a meteorological tempest; for as in this case the equilibrium of the elements is discomposed, in the other the balance of the affections—the elements of the mind—suffer a similar disturbance.

But although we thus give to study a separate consideration as a means of improvement, yet its value arises rather from its giving efficiency to the other means we have mentioned, than as an independent one itself. The mind must be furnished with materials on which to operate. Cut off from all communication with the external world, and left to its own solitary meditations, the strongest understanding would be able to acquire only a very scanty stock of ideas, and these extremely imperfect. Even in Mathematics, Ethics, and the other abstract Sciences, where the reasoning faculty has the largest scope, and the most difficult tasks, it must be supplied with first principles, by which to guide its progress, and on which to rest its conclusions. But while study is thus dependent on external sources of information, these are in their turn still more dependent on study. A more particular analysis of the nature of that kind of mental exercise we now recommend, will make this fact sufficiently apparent.

Meditation or study implies, in the first place, *fixedness of attention*, or an exclusive and continuous direction of the thoughts towards a particular object. This has been described, as "the most valuable of all our intellectual habits." Even Sir Isaac Newton is said to have attributed his wonderful attainments and discoveries, not to extraordinary penetration, but to this steady and undivided concentration of thought: how far the correctness of this remark was affected by the excessive modesty of this wonderful philosopher, we cannot undertake to say; but it is certain that thousands are far more indebted to this power of attention, than to any superiority of genius. In any difficult enquiry, the human intellect, dark and enfeebled as it is, requires some time in order to take a clear and comprehensive view of the subject, the memory and imagination cannot always on a sudden, produce the exact materials wanted to enable the judgment to form its decisions. Many truths can only be ascertained by a long chain of reasoning; and distinctly to perceive the connexion between every link, obviously requires continuous, as well as deep attention.

But it is astonishing how a subject, which at first view seemed all intricacy and confusion, unfolds itself, and appears at last in a clear and strong light, when carefully considered in all its bearings, and steadily kept in the eye of the mind for some considerable time.

The minds of some people appear to be composed of such flippant and unsettled materials, as to be incurably impatient of restraint, and utterly unfit for any profound study: and even minds the most tractable and patient of labour, do not acquire this habit of attention without some difficulty.

Many directions have been given relative to the best means of fixing the attention, and various devices have been resorted to in order to facilitate so desirable a matter. Generally, it may be observed that more depends upon the state of the mind, *morally* considered, than upon any outward circumstances. Where there is cordial attachment to the subject which engages the attention, arising from a just sense of its value, there will seldom be much difficulty in fixing the attention. All violent passion is hostile to study. The attention cannot without great difficulty be confined when the mind is under the influence of anger, grief, fear, or any other engrossing emotion: If we are labouring under any bodily uneasiness or pain, our meditations will be broken and fitful; the same will be the case if the attention is solicited by business, or enslaved by care.

But here, as elsewhere, almost every thing submits to the power of custom and habit. Habit will not only deprive outward circumstances of their natural hostility to mental exertion, but even seem to convert them into positive facilities. Thus a person would be distracted abroad, and in the pres-

ence of moving and surrounding objects, who has been accustomed to meditate in a secluded room. Others again have been so long deprived of this advantage, that it has ceased to be one to them; and to be seated amidst all the apparatus of study would effectually embarrass them. To such persons, the vast expanse appears to be necessary to give expansion to the mind; and the unobstructed light of heaven illuminates their intellect as well as their senses.

The exercise of the judgment is a necessary part of study. This implies the explanation of facts, and the verification of doctrines, by the application of principles and truths already known. From the examination of a bone, or perhaps the fragment of a bone, the zoologist can determine the size and species of the animal to which it has belonged.\* In the same manner, the physician ascertains the nature of a disease from certain symptoms or appearances which it presents. A learned

\*It is related of Cuvier, that he was able to re-construct a whole animal from the inspection of one fragment. He had discovered by his previous researches, such a connexion between the several bones, that a particular curvature or a small protuberance on a jaw, or a tooth, was sufficient to indicate a particular species of animals, and to prove that the fragment could not have belonged to any other. The "Recherches sur les Ossements Fossiles," have made us acquainted with more than seventy species of animals before unknown.

judge easily distinguishes that which is pertinent from that which is merely plausible, either in the evidence of witnesses, or the pleadings of council. Again, an experienced cattle-dealer can state most accurately the value of an animal—a horse for instance—from the consideration of his age, action, size, breed, and soundness; properties in which the value of these animals are known to consist. All these are examples of the exercise of judgment. In each case there is a recurrence to facts and principles already known, with the application of these principles to the determination of the question at issue, or the matter under consideration.

A sound judgment in some individuals, is evidently a natural endowment to a certain extent, arising from an instinctive quickness in recollecting those principles or facts which are proper to the occasion on which the judgment is to be exercised, and also from a native clearness and accuracy in perceiving the agreement or disagreement of ideas. This some would call common sense. However, as the genuine principles of common sense are comparatively few, it is manifest that the exercise of the judgment must mainly depend upon acquired information; and the strength and accuracy of a man's judgment will pretty nearly correspond with the extent and correctness of his knowledge.

Integrity, or honesty of purpose, is necessary to a sound judgment. The passions have nothing to

do in the discovery of truth, and their interfreence will certainly be pernicious. Prejudice or partiality disorders the mental vision, and strangely misleads the mind. When the principles of judging on any particular subject are so familiar, that a decision can be pronounced at first view, and without examination, study is out of the question; but when these principles require to be sought, and when found to be examined: in other words, when the comparison of the matter to be tried with the rule of judging demands considerable attention, before the agreement or disagreement can be fairly perceived, then may we be said to study.

Lastly; study includes the exercise of the memory, not only in producing, when wanted, the proper materials by which judgments are formed; but in such a systematic classification and disposition of its ideas as it receives them, as will enable it to produce them without difficulty or delay.

Meditation is a kind of intellectual digestion. That unexamined, unsorted assemblage of crude conceptions possessed by many great readers and shallow thinkers, gives no more strength to the mind than that food does to the body, which, though conveyed to the stomach, remains unacted upon by the gastric juice. It is only when by diligent scrutiny, we are enabled to understand a proposition, and have rational conviction of its truth, that it becomes properly our own, and forms a part of our intellectual being.

## CHAPTER V.

### ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON READING—ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS, &c.

As we purpose in the present chapter to refer the young reader to a select list of works, which may be recommended as worthy of careful perusal, we shall take the liberty of making a few additional remarks on reading. The very great importance of the subject must be our apology for introducing it again, and the sole ground on which we claim the reader's indulgence for what he may deem tautology.

As the most valuable library is useless, without a taste for reading; in like manner a fondness for books, however vehement, is both useless and pernicious, unless placed under the control of sober judgment. Prudence is alike requisite in the choice of books, as well as the manner of reading them; both are highly important; they are the raw material, and the machinery by which the precious fabric of mind must be elevated to its legitimate purposes.

Unhappily, nothing is more common than to see people exhibiting this untutored and misguided passion for books. It is to supply some check to this prevailing evil, and to assist in the creation of a better taste, that reading is made the specific subject of this chapter.

We are aware of difficulties in our way ; and that many before have essayed the same thing to little effect. The variety of tastes which every where exists, and that volatility of mind which belongs to the youthful character, create obstacles, which might discourage attempt. Impelled, however, by a sympathy for ingenuous youth, we shall tender them our humble counsel ; and though humble, yet it is counsel suggested by experience, as the writer has felt the necessity in his own case. Such assistance as he could wish to present his reader, would, at the period referred to, have greatly facilitated his own progress in mental improvement. It would have conduced to economy of time, as well as stability of mind. When a fervent taste for books is first excited, the mind becomes greedy of novelty, and by its unchecked freedom, acquires a vitiated taste. There is a disposition to read whatever comes in its way, with no other motive than to please, and occupy the passing hour. Such a disposition of mind is unhealthy. Nor do we wish to check the ardency of the first love for reading. It were cruel to do so. When the youthful understanding first awakes from the slumber of inanity,

what a delightful consciousness seizes the breast! It is emphatically the birth of sensibility and vision. We have felt its glow, and the recollection now thrills our spirit as if the time were again present. No! we hail the tyro on the threshold of knowledge; and would only volunteer our services in the enterprise he meditates.

We have already expressed our estimate of book-knowledge; where shall we begin to direct the new-born taste? We shall commence on the supposition that the student has already attained the mechanical power of reading; and that he begins to crave opportunities for the indulgence of this delightful art. We would on the outset inform our pupil, a few *good* books, *well* read, are the best means of attaining a just judgment in the choice of books. This must be the preface to the ensuing directions, and account for the apparent scantiness of the books we recommend for perusal. Our primary aim is to suggest books of character, which shall *repay* the reading of them. To inspire a noble emulation, we would in the first place urge you to peruse the biographies of eminent and worthy individuals, who have risen from the humbler walks of life. The volumes published by the Society for the Diffusion of useful knowledge, entitled the pursuit of Knowledge under difficulties, will direct you to many. The Lives of Dr. Franklin—James Ferguson—and Kirke White, will stimulate you, and suggest many collateral means in the pursuit

of self-improvement. Next we would strongly recommend the careful and repeated perusal of Watts' Improvement of the Mind, and Todd's Student's Manual. *These are* invaluable helps in directing and encouraging self-education. As a suitable appendage read 'Lectures to Young Men, delivered in Glasgow by Ministers of various denominations, 2 vols., First and Second series'—These will inform your judgment, and give a salutary bias to your studies.

Let History have much of your attention ; it will expand your views of men and manners, by shewing you the experience of past ages. In directing you to suitable works on this head, we regret the paucity of *comprehensive Histories*, written with taste and perspicuity. Such as are professedly written for youthful readers, are generally superficial, and the larger histories on the other hand, are too elaborate and intricate. Histories also are frequently made the channels of party opinion, instead of being the vehicles of unbiased narrative, or the transcripts of truth. We give this caution to the reader that he may weigh for himself probabilities and consequences, in his reading of history. As a first book, Goldsmith's History of England, edited by Pinnock, is pleasing. Another which ought to be mentioned, is 'Morell's Studies in History,' containing the history of England, from its earliest record, in a Series of Essays, accompanied with reflections, references to original Authorities, and

Historical Questions, 2 Vols, 12mo. In the list of books which is given at the end of this chapter, those that we regard as our best historians will be enumerated.

*Natural History* is a necessary and an interesting branch of knowledge. It will lead you to notice the providence of God,—wonderful in its minuteness, and glorious in its amplitude—to admire the work of his hands, and inspire you with gratitude and reverence to the Father of all mercies. The House I live in,—White's Natural History of Selborne,—Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History, and Paley's Natural Theology are valuable books on this subject.

*Elementary Science* should have a place in your studies, read as helps, Joyce's Scientific Dialogues,—Marcetts Conversations on Natural Philosophy, and Mitchell's Universal Catechist or Student's Text book of general knowledge.

We would now direct your attention to books on *Reasoning*. And here we shall recommend you to commence with Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding, and Duncan's Logic.

As an Introduction to *Divinity*, read Watsons's Conversations for the Young.

Resuming our admonitions we would say, let it always be your determination when you commence with a book, to read it through; otherwise your reading will do you little good. To *skim* over books is not reading them. Many pass for

readers who act in this way ; but they are only smatterers, and will never rank among the truly intelligent. Let it be a maxim with *you*, when you have found a good book, to *read it again, and again*. By this means your understanding and memory will be strengthened. Such books will inspire you with a turn for *thinking*. Do not hastily condemn books merely because you do not understand them. Reflect rather on your own deficiency of comprehension, and resolve on conquering your author, or of being conquered. Be not discouraged by your apparent slowness in acquiring knowledge. Only strive, and you will eventually succeed. Remember that the intellect, as well as the muscles, is strengthened by effort. Though we have provided you with abundant labour in the way of reading, we would, at the same time, guard you against an intemperate indulgence in it. Study times and seasons. You have duties to perform in the sphere you move in, which demand you *first* attention. Ascertain the periods of your *proper* leisure, and only use these for your purpose. It is probable your business or occupation claims nearly all your time. Perhaps you commence at six in the morning, and possibly may have to be engaged until eight at night, with only half an hour's allowance for your meals ; and you may think it impossible for you to prosecute what we have laid down, without stealing a portion of time now, and then, from rigid duty. This is supposing an extreme case ; yet still, you have

time to improve yourself. Your scanty opportunities will then surely be the more economized. Those who have amassed the greatest riches, have not unfrequently had the smallest capital to begin with ; and the very smallness of your means ought to be the very motive why you should endeavour to make the most of them. Remember that as the sun shines the brightest through a small aperture, so will your acquirements shine the brighter, by making their way through a cloud of difficulties. There is no *hero* without his difficulties ! Nor is it necessary that you should trespass on your proper time of rest. Nay this would do you positive injury—it would destroy your health.

If you can secure but an hour in the day, you may do wonders. Have your plans and abide by them. During the time allotted for a meal, you may secure ten minutes : this secured *regularly* for some fixed course of reading, will prove beneficial; if it be in no other way than by learning you the *habit* of fixing your attention. Besides this, if you can secure an hour after the duties of the day for purposes of mental improvement, you will feel it a delightful recreation. Perhaps you have occasionally attempted this, and have found yourself disposed to be drowsy. To persons accustomed to active engagements during the day, this is a natural result ; yet be resolved, and you may conquer this. It may be difficult at first, but you must learn to distinguish between difficulties and impossibilities :

many have had the same difficulty, and have mastered it. There is another thing that must not be neglected, if you would have a healthy body, as well as a healthy mind; you must be an early riser, and avail yourself of half an hour's exercise daily at the least. Let this too be done at stated times. *Good rules acted upon, are the sinews of character.* Read the life of Dr. Dwight, as attached to his system of Theology; and there learn how time may be economized—emulate him, and you shall as surely be *morally great*. Frequently call to mind what is accomplished by perseverance. Look at the building of a bird's nest; it is accomplished by little, and little. The mightiest labours are only accomplished by progressive efforts. To return to our subject—frequently review the books you have read, and have a note-book by you to record your sentiments, as to the character of your author; in this way you will find thought will reproduce thought. If the book be your own property, mark with a pencil the passages which strike you, either for their beauty of style, or their justness of sentiment.

We say, *if the book be your own*,—never do it else. If a book is lent you, be scrupulously careful in keeping it clean, and in returning it in due time. A blank piece of paper may serve you, instead of marking the book; and the carefulness you manifest in these particulars will, very probably, secure you the repetition of a similar favour. In reading, always have a dictionary at hand, and habituate

yourself never to let a word pass, which is not understood. This at the first you may feel troublesome; nevertheless the habit will tend much to the clearness of your understanding, as well as to the improvement of your vocabulary. Let Grammar, Arithmetic, and Geography be made familiar by you. Be not discouraged, though your progress be scarcely perceptible in your steps towards improvement. Be ambitious to be *sure*, rather than *quick*, in your progress. Learn from the infant child in his first attempts to learn to walk. Impetuosity does not forward the acquirement; it is the repetition of tiny efforts, which secures the object desired. Be content to imitate the juvenile preceptor. Patience and perseverance will overcome every obstacle that may place itself in your way to self-improvement.

Be not anxious to have a many books; be careful rather, to have only those of solid worth. The elements of knowledge, like the elements of nature, are comparatively few. A small number of books wisely chosen, may contain nearly the germs of all available knowledge. In the list of books we have presented you, those marked with a single star we deem indispensable to a good collection. As we have before urged, read such over and over again. They contain genuine seeds of knowledge. In the several classifications of literature which we have given, we should like you to read the books in the

order in which they stand, as far as is consistent with our former directions. Though we have placed *Theology* nearly the last, we hope you will always have a book of that class on the way. As much as possible, limit your attention to *one book* at a time. Fix on that branch of knowledge to which you are predisposed in your taste, and be determined to excel in it. We do not say, confine yourself to it, but let it have the most of your attention. This admonition we give, knowing the common instability of youth. To a mind that is immature, "change of pursuit is one of the most dangerous experiments." If you are really thirsting for knowledge, you will be sure to look for the stream; and in proportion as you feel athirst, you will drink. A curiosity and *thirst for knowledge, is the only sure indication you can give of ever making anything out in its pursuit.*

In purchasing books, choose such as are issued by respectable publishers—and such as are printed in *good type*; these will save both your money and your eyes. The Octavo size is the best. Generally speaking, you may find what you want at second hand; in this way you will spend your money with greater economy. Do not get into the way of buying books in numbers—they are frequently imperfect, and will generally cost you much more than they may be had for in volumes. Avoid the habit of spending your money in magazines—nay, we had almost said avoid rea-

ding them, for the most part they impart knowledge superficially, and foster a dissipated taste. In this matter, however, we think if you will only take our advice, and *study* the course of books we have suggested, your judgment will lead you to be select in your miscellaneous reading. We have not said anything about your reading reviews, criticisms, &c.; our aim has been, rather to direct you to such reading as will practically benefit you. We do not object to your cultivating the higher branches of taste; but we would have you well grounded in solid reading *first*. When you have proceeded thus far, a considerate, and choice course of reading in this department will be of advantage to you; they will supply you with new sentiments, of written excellence, and will, at the same time, enlarge your capacity for judging of the literary character of books. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, and Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, will serve you as an introduction to this interesting and delightful study.

Before dismissing the subject of books, we shall offer a few remarks on light reading. We wish to guard you against contracting a taste for novel reading. *Some* few novels or tales are *worth* perusing; about one, perhaps, in two hundred; but the chance is, whether you may happen to have that individual one thrown in your way. Good and select Biographies and Travels, may be read as light reading to advantage. Poetry is calculated, when well written, to improve your taste; and Travels, *well* authentica-

*ted, will store your memory with facts and observations.* We do not deny that evil may be found in Poetry; nay, we admit, that much that is written, is calculated to generate loose thoughts, and viler passions. It is to be lamented that so few of our Poets, comparatively, can be safely recommended without restriction; yet there is sufficient Poetry to be found that is unobjectionable, for promiscuous reading. In the extended list which follows, the reader will find an abundant variety of books, which we would put in the place of novels or romances. Our opinion is, that it will be better for you, in every respect, neither to taste, nor to handle such books. Finally, that your labours may be blessed, beseech your heavenly Father to guide the reins of your mind—ask for wisdom; he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.' Your Bible will then be a chosen book—a fountain of wisdom; at whose streams you will gladly drink, and be refreshed by the way. There you will be impressed with the sublime truth—"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom;" and will find that your Maker will be your guardian protector, and will lead you in the way everlasting.

We subjoin a list of English Books in the order we would have them to be read, in each separate class. Some few of the books may be beyond your means to purchase; but generally speaking, they will be found economically selected. Those books marked with a single star ought to be purchased first.

## A LIST OF BOOKS.

### GRAMMAR.

- \* Lennie's Grammar.
- Pinnock's Comprehensive Do.
- \*\* Murray's Large Grammar, Exercises and Key.

### DICTIONARIES. (Store yourself well with these.)

- Johnson's Pocket Dictionary.
- \* Carpenter's Dictionary of Synonymes, the latest edition.
- \* Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary.
- \* Johnson's Dictionary, 8vo. Abridged from Todd's.
- \* Etymological Guide to the English Language, the latest edition, published by Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh.  
4to edition by Chalmers.
- \* Mauder's Treasury of Knowledge.
- Gurney's Dictionary of the Bible.

### ENCYCLOPÆDIAS. General Knowledge, &c.

- Guy's Pocket Cyclopædia, the latest edition.
- \* Kett's Elements of General Knowledge, 2 vols. 8vo.
- \* Chamber's Information for the People; 2 vols. 8vo.

### BIOGRAPHY.

- The Life of Dr. Franklin.
- \* The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, 2 vols.
- \* The Life of Dr. Dwight.
- Orton's Life of Doddridge.
- Brewster's Life of Sir Isaac Newton; (Family Library.)
- Boswell's Life of Johnson.
- Plutarch's Lives.
- The Life of the Rev. Richard Cecil.

### ANTIQUITIES.

- Adam's Roman Antiquities.

Potter's Greek Antiquities.  
Jurien's History of the Ancient Worship of the Church.  
\*\* Fleury's Manners of the Ancient Israelites.  
\* Lowman Hebrew Ritual.  
\* Do. on the Civil Government of the Hebrews.

#### HISTORY.

\* Bossuet's Universal History of the World.  
Rollin's Ancient History.  
\* Morell's Studies in History; containing the History of England in a series of Essays, &c., 2 vols.  
\*\* Dr. Henry's History of England, with Andrew's Continuation.  
\* Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.  
Pictorial History of England, published by Knight.  
Allison's History of Europe.  
Mavor's Ancient and Modern Universal History.  
Shaaron Turner's History of the World.  
Shuckford's Connexions.  
Prideaux's Do.  
\* Josephus by Whiston.

#### GEOGRAPHY.

Goldsmith's Geography for Schools: the latest edition.  
\* Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, Do.

#### TRAVELS.

Stephen's Travels in the Holy Land.  
Bruce's Travels.  
Cook's Voyages.  
Mungo Park's Travels.  
Captain Ross's Expedition.  
Landor's Discovery of the Niger.  
Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea, in one volume  
unabridged.

**NATURAL HISTORY and SCIENCE.**

- \*White's *Natural History of Selborne*.
- Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History*.
- Brewster's *Natural Magic*.
- Richardson's *Geology for Beginners*.
- \*Parke's *Elementary Treatise on Chymistry*.
- Babbage on the *Economy of Machinery, &c.*
- Sir J. F. Herschell's *Discourse on Natural Philosophy*.

**LOGIC.**

- \*Duncan's *Logic*.
- Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*.
- Watt's *Logic*.

**METAPHYSICS.**

- Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*, Svo. abridged by Wynn.
- Reid on the *Intellectual and Active Powers, &c.*
- Dugald Stewart on the *Philosophy of the Mind, &c.*
- Do. *Philosophical Essays*.
- Watt's *Philosophical Essays*.
- Beattie's *Elements of Moral Science*.

**MATHEMATICS.**

- \*Crossley's *Arithmetic*.
- \*\*Keith's *Complete Practical Arithmetician*.
- \*\*Fenning's *Young Algebraist's Companion*.
- \*Ingram's *Concise System of Mathematics*.
- Euler's *Elements of Algebra*.

**POETRY.**

- Bloomfield's *Farmer's Boy*.
- Kirke White's *Poems*.
- Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*.
- Goldsmith's *Deserted Village, and the Traveller*.
- Roger's *Pleasures of Memory*.

Blair's Grave.  
\*Thomson's Seasons.  
\*Cowper's Poems.  
Pollok's Course of Time.  
James Montgomery's Poems.  
Young's Night Thoughts.  
Milton's Paradise Lost.  
Spenser's Faerie Queene.

## THEOLOGY.

\*Campbell on Miracles.  
\*Paley's Natural Theology.  
Gisborne's Do.  
Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion, by Le Clerc, translated by Clarke.  
Leadies (Rev. Charles) Works.  
\*\*Wardlaw's Christian Ethics.  
\*\*Baxter's Christian Directory.  
\*\*Doddridge's Lectures on Preumatology, Ethics, and Divinity.  
\*\*Pearson on the Creed.  
\*Hartwell Horne's Abridgment of his Introduction to the study of the Scriptures.  
\*Keith on Prophecy.  
Newton on the Prophecies.  
\*Butler's Analogy and Works.  
Bp. Hall's Works.  
Howe's Do.  
Dr. Barrows' Do.  
Robert Hall's Do.  
Bickersteth's Christian Student.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

\*John Foster's Essays, and Works.  
Isaac Taylor's Works.

- \*Pascal's Thoughts.
- \*Rev. John Todd's Works: (the American.)
- Remains of Rev. Richard Cecil.
- Longinus on the Sublime.
- Addison's Criticisms on Milton.  
———on the Pleasures of the Taste and Imagination.
- Bacon's Essays and Works.
- Dr. Watt's Works.
- D Israeli on the Literary Character.
- Cowper's Letters.
- Montgomery's Christian Correspondence.

*Note*: The reader would do well to connect himself with some *select* Library; especially in reading voluminous works: those marked with two stars, he would do well to purchase when means will allow, and the unmarked ones as his opportunities or his taste may direct him.

## CHAPTER VI.

### UNION OF BUSINESS WITH STUDY.

THE possibility of combining the pursuit of general knowledge with the prosecution of ordinary business, has been established by too many and too decisive examples, to allow of its being successfully disputed. Nevertheless, many will venture to question the probability, if not the possibility, of such a combination becoming general; or even existing beyond a few solitary instances. Perhaps these persons would deem such a coalition unnatural, because demanding a violence of effort, and a severity of self discipline, to which the bulk of mankind will never be disposed, and indeed ought not to be desired to submit.

Others will perhaps demur to our recommendations—as they doubtless would to any scheme of giving education to the working classes—under the impression, that education possessed by such persons, tends to unsettle their habits of subordination and industry, on which depend not only their own

comfort and happiness, but those of the whole community. Literary attainments, they would remark, induce a kind of sensibility or refinement, which revolts at the ruggedness of muscular exertion; while the idea of self-importance which is invariably produced by a smattering of scholarship, is very much at war with the submission expected of a menial, and the patience necessary to a drudge; and, moreover, that a devotion to literary pursuits, must occasion such an absorption of time and attention, as would necessarily lead to the neglect of many secular duties.

These objections and surmises, plausible as they appear, may be shewn to originate chiefly in ignorance and misconception, and to have more apparent, than real importance. This task we shall now attempt; and we moreover purpose to demonstrate, that the reciprocal influence of secular business and literary studies, is not so hostile and disagreeable, as is commonly supposed.

Every ordinary business demands the largest and the best part of the time and attention; consequently it is impossible to deny that business places formidable impediments in the way of study. With only fragments of time and second-hand thoughts, a man cannot be expected to make a very rapid proficiency in learning: yet it would be easy to give a long list of names who have found their way to the very first ranks of literature, not only in defiance of a laborious occupation, but even of

want and of the utmost obscurity of condition. Such examples are more than sufficient for our purpose, which is simply to prove, that *moderate attainments in learning may be acquired by working people, by the aid of industry, prudence, and self-denial.*

To many persons, the most obvious difficulty attending self-education is, want of time; but this difficulty is in few cases insurmountable. Every ordinary business has its intermissions of rest, its hours of cessation from labour. The lowest mechanician or labourer, has usually, a certain portion of time every day at his command, which he can fairly call his own. The quantum of leisure enjoyed by working people differs very much in its comparative amount; perhaps as much as half a day differs from half an hour. It ought however to be observed, that many are destitute of leisure through their own fault; that is, through immoderate devotion to business, tardiness in the performance of its duties, or an unskilful distribution of time. If many of those who now complain of want of time for purposes of study, would bring a little more prudence and dispatch to bear on their worldly callings, they would both secure more leisure and do their work better.

Suppose twelve hours of the twenty-four be given to business, and ten to refreshments—enough for each assuredly—two will remain to be disposed of; and he who shall diligently spend two hours every

day in the cultivation of his mind, will accomplish all that we could wish, and much more than we have prescribed.

It would be advantageous if two consecutive and unbroken hours in some part of every day, could be devoted to intellectual purposes; but even this is not necessary; if the time should be composed of half a dozen separate parcels, still it may be made to yield the profit we have stated.

It is however admitted that domestic attentions often claim much of the time which is left by business, and that individuals so circumstanced, may not possess even that pittance of leisure we have supposed; but even such persons need not abandon the object in despair: if they can only devote the fraction of an hour every day to attentive reading, they would every day add something to their stores of knowledge and in less than ten years have acquired as much information as would entitle them to the honourable appellation of *intelligent*. Certain it is, that more has been accomplished by efforts brief in continuance, but often and perseveringly repeated, than by violent and unremitting exertions. On the other hand, there are many thousands of the labouring classes who are free from domestic incumbrances, and whose business so moderately taxes their time, that their opportunities for mental improvement would scarcely be improved if they had nothing else to mind; and who can, in fact spend as much time in study as is sufficient fairly

to weary them, and render a return to their occupation desirable even for recreation's sake. We are inclined to believe that none have a better opportunity of uniting a cultivated mind with a vigorous body than such persons; and it is highly probable, that if they could be allowed to devote themselves entirely to literary pursuits, they would not find their increased command of time followed by a corresponding advance in improvement: they would discover that intense application could not be continued beyond a certain limit, without producing such fatigue and languor as would render study painful and unprofitable: and that they must either allow themselves considerable intervals of relaxation, or continue a slow and languid progress, to the certain injury both of mind and body.

It is also to be recollectcd, that many of the simple callings of humble life demand little exertion of thought; while they employ the hands, they leave the mind at perfect leisure. Some of the lighter employments of husbandry, as following the plough, for instance, allow the mind to be as undisturbed and as abstracted as the most profound meditation requires; and persons so engaged, if disposed, might spend a considerable part even of the hours of labour in the most successful study; while the healthful employment renders it impossible for them to injure either their mind or body by the most intense application. Many of the common callings

are, it is true, incompatible with much reflection; but these perhaps permit conversation, and furnish other facilities for improvement.

No doubt many will reject our scheme as a grievous imposition on domestic enjoyments. To exchange the delightful pleasure of doing nothing, or talking about nothing, for what they conceive to be, the dull employment of reading, or the still more unpleasant business of close thinking, may appear to some an intolerable hardship. Every one must however allow, that a man would be likely to make himself abundantly more useful by adopting our plan; and none who fairly try it, will fail to discover, that it is productive of unspeakably more personal happiness.

But besides the consumption of time which business occasions, it places a considerable difficulty in the way of mental improvement, by the fatigue and anxiety it usually produces. From this cause the mind is often indisposed, and even unfitted for study. This assumes the appearance of a very brave objection to our scheme of self-education; but, as we have elsewhere intimated, much that is formidable in the objection, will disappear when closely examined.

There are callings which are peculiarly harrassing to the mind; which severely exercise the thoughts, and are almost necessarily attended with considerable anxiety: there are others which task the physical powers to exhaustion. Now with regard

to both these, we allow the objection considerable weight. But these are comparatively rare cases; and we must maintain that moderate bodily labour, so far from producing any indisposition for study, operates as a recreative exercise to the mind, and thereby creates an appetite for it. As food can only be properly relished at regular and moderately distant intervals; so intellectual pursuits possess a far greater charm to a person who can only return to them at intervals, and after the mind has been detained by unpleasing occupations, than to one who has no other business.\* It is quite as possible to surfeit the mind with intemperance of application, as the body with excess of pleasure. And that labour must be severe indeed, which would make

"It is natural to enquire," says the Biographer of the Rev. E. Payson, "whether there was any thing in the circumstances of his (Mr. Payson's) early youth, which will account for his mental habits, and especially for the rapidity of his mental operations. A partial answer may be found in the fact, that his time was divided between labour and study. His father, like most ministers of country parishes, derived the means of supporting his family, in part, from a farm, which his sons assisted in cultivating. From his share in the agricultural labours, the subject of these memoirs was not exempted, particularly in the busy season of the year. But whatever was his employment, though he appears to have engaged in it with cheerfulness, and to have prosecuted it with fidelity, his thirst for knowledge was the ruling passion of his soul. This he sought to quench, or rather to cherish, by resorting to his books at

reading a painful exercise. In fact, when either the mind or the body is moderately fatigued with business, some light mental exercise is far more adapted to refresh, than to produce loathing and weariness.

It is necessary however to observe, that these positions are only true of those who possess an ardent love of learning, and who have had sufficient resolution to acquire the command of their thoughts. Habit will reconcile study with the most untoward occupations; without it, the smallest obstacle will be insuperable.

That there are difficulties attending this union of business and study, we most readily allow; difficulties which no strength of understanding, or firmness of resolution, or habit, can wholly obviate or deprive of their power of resistance. Nevertheless, these very difficulties are often the means of

every interval from toil, however short, when he tasked his mind to the utmost of his power, intent upon making the greatest possible acquisition in a given time. His mind, though strung up to the highest pitch of exertion at these seasons, suffered no injury thereby, as it was soon diverted from its employment by a call to the field, and every repetition of the process extended its capabilities and power. The acquisition in this way obtained, furnished materials on which to employ his thoughts while engaged in manual labour, which he would not fail to digest, and lay up in store for future use:—a voluntary discipline of most auspicious influence, as it respects the faculty of acquiring knowledge, and the power of retaining it."

calling into existence a *moral* energy, by which they are sometimes more than counteracted. They generate habits of self-command, resolution and patient thought, which to all purposes of successful mental culture, are of more avail than the most splendid outward advantages. Thus for example, a person whose poverty enables him to procure only a very few books, will naturally be induced to read those few with extraordinary care, and thus stand a fair chance of acquiring the important habit of careful reading. From the same cause, he will most probably acquire the habit of close and independent thinking, from the necessity which the want of books imposes of exercising his own judgment. It is more convenient to establish a position by authority, than by reasoning and argument, when authors are easily accessible; and this, in fact, is often a very observable failing in bookish men; but it is a failing rarely discoverable in those who have risen to eminence by their own unaided efforts.

Again, those, who in default of the conveniences of a private room, are obliged to study where they can—on the road—in the fields—in company—in bed—in brief opportunities of irregular and uncertain occurrence, cannot certainly be expected to make rapid progress against such interruption; but then the struggle they have thus to maintain, tends to produce a self-control, a presence of mind, and a moral hardihood, which are of far more importance, and would eventually be much more advan-

tageous, than a secluded room, and undisturbed leisure.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### UNION OF STUDY WITH BUSINESS.

HAVING contemplated the union of business and study, as the latter is affected by the former; we proceed next to consider the influence of knowledge, and the pursuit of knowledge on manual industry, and on the secular habits of the working classes.

We have already stated, that there are individuals who think this influence upon the whole, undesirable; who imagine, that a devotion to literature and scientific pursuits by the operative community, is at war with their habits of industry; not merely by creating a distaste for manual labour; but by encroaching upon the time and attention which is due to labour; and that to those who are in the capacity of servants, education is peculiarly unsuitable, as tending to fill them with notions of self-importance, inconsistent with the subordinate station they occupy in society.

That there is an appearance of plausibility in these allegations, we do not deny, no more than that examples are to be found in their apparent verification. It is important however to observe, that these exceptionable examples are chiefly supplied by a class of persons, who seem to exist for the purpose of making every thing exceptionable with which they happen to be connected. The parties attached to, may possibly not be wanting in capacity; but grievously so in discretion. They may have the power to act; but want the prudence or tact which suggests the fitness of time and place. Religion in general, as well as particular religious communities, are invariably cheapened and injured by the presence of those indiscreet adherents. Perhaps they have a zeal of God, but it is not according to knowledge: they do not bring forth their fruit in its season. Some particular virtues or modes of conduct are usually found to obtain an ascendent importance in their estimation, by which they are betrayed into the neglect of other virtues equally essential; and thus the uniformity of their character is destroyed.

But as the indiscretions of these persons are not fairly charged upon religion in this case; so neither are they upon mental cultivation in the other. They bring their folly with them; and both education and religion are but the unoffending causes of developing qualities, which would certainly have been exhibited in other circumstances,

It is very unfortunate also, that many of those who attempt to educate themselves, are injudicious in the selection of subjects of study. If they avoid books absolutely mischievous or trifling, they perhaps addict themselves to the study of some branch of physical science, to the total neglect of moral truth. The perfections and laws of God; the duties they owe to God and their fellow creatures, with their obligations and motives to perform them, are truths which altogether escape their notice : their learning is quite disconnected from piety : the Bible they wholly neglect ; and they are consequently strangers to its heavenly doctrines.

Now that such unsanctified and misdirected studies may be injurious to a man in his secular capacity, we think is not improbable ; at all events we cannot undertake to be responsible for their moral effects. The only system of mental improvement for the influence of which we profess to be answerable, is, that which has utility and not curiosity for its guide, and which consequently assumes the paramount importance of religious knowledge.

This is, in fact, the education we have recommended. And, that literary pursuits and attainments, selected and guarded in the manner we have described, would exercise an unfriendly influence on secular industry, we will venture positively to deny. No one can certainly imagine that the pursuit or the possession of correct information on religious subjects, can have any tendency to unset-

tle or injure the habits of any person as a servant or a man of business; because, among other things, he will learn, that industry, fidelity, and contentment, are virtues enjoined by Divine authority, and that they are equally essential to personal, as to public happiness.

It is ignorance only that regards manual labour, and inferiority of civil rank as misfortunes. The philosopher is indeed sensible of all that is disagreeable in a humble condition; but he is also aware that it is exempt from a thousand anxieties and vexations which disturb the repose of the wealthy and the great; and moreover, that the influence of manual industry on bodily health, serenity of mind, and even virtuous habits, is naturally so favourable as in reality to counterbalance its inconveniences. The christian has an additional, and a much more powerful motive to contented industry, arising from the assurance that the station he occupies, and the duties connected with it, have been assigned to him by the Supreme Being.

Sound philosophy, as well as religion, teaches that the variety existing in the secular condition of mankind with respect to wealth, influence, and station, forms a part of the arrangements of Divine Providence, since it manifestly arises, in a great measure from the natural disparity of intellectual endowments, and of opportunities for their development. Those inequalities in society which arise out of moral causes, we must indeed except from

this remark: vice and ignorance depress some; but God wills no man to be ignorant and vile: virtue and knowledge exalt others; but God compels none to be virtuous and wise, and hence the diffusion of education as well as of piety has a natural tendency to produce a more equal state of things—to narrow the chasms of society, and to draw the different ranks of men somewhat closer together;—but the greatest imaginable extension of the means of knowledge and virtue, would not obliterate those distinctions that are most prominent and useful. For supposing all men to be equal in one point of virtue; which is not naturally impossible; and supposing all men equally sensible of the value of mental culture; yet still the intellectual discrepancies of mankind, and their unequal command of external advantages, would create a considerable part of the existing diversity in society. If a perfect equality in the outward condition of mankind were now established, this chimaerical level would not exist a single day: the superior capacity and energy of character possessed by some, would speedily exalt them above their fellows; while others, less favoured with intellectual vigour, would as quickly sink. The abolition of this idolized equality would be still more accelerated by the irregular distribution of what is called the gifts of fortune, or the disproportionate command of the opportunities and circumstances, necessary in general to the acquisition of wealth.

Some diversity in the external condition of mankind is manifestly essential to the well-being of society, and conducive to general happiness. The various arts, employments, professions, and offices, by which the great machine of business is moved, are necessarily connected with different degrees of profit, pleasure, and honour; this circumstance appears to require a suitable diversity of talent, or condition to insure the cheerful and efficient discharge of this variety of duty: if all men were equally qualified for the higher departments of business, and equal also in point of wealth and influence, it is difficult to conceive how a most ruinous neglect of the meaner duties of life could be avoided, or upon what principle the equal and overwhelmingly numerous claims to the higher, could be amicably adjusted.

Now he whose mind is thus enlightened with respect to the necessity of civil subordination, and diversity of civil rank; who views the subject in the light of that Divine Revelation which places the proper dignity of man, not in external circumstances, but in the virtues of the soul; and which ranks among the noblest of these virtues—those of fidelity, patience, meekness, and humility:—he, in short, who has been taught to regard his own condition, though humble, as the appointment of Divine Providence, will certainly have stronger motives to a cheerful submission to its difficulties and privations, than one who is entirely ignorant on the sub-

ject. For it cannot surely be supposed, that a man should decline in the faithful performance of his duty, in proportion as the views of his obligations to discharge it, increase in force and clearness.

Those who hold the opinion that education of even a very humble description, is a questionable benefit, if not a positive evil, to persons in a servile capacity, are not, we fear, if masters, among those who are willing to "give to their servants that which is just and equal." For why be afraid of knowledge? Truth and justice court the light: guilt only seeks concealment. A higher condition of mind, we may allow, would make a servant more sensitive to insult; yet it would no doubt render him less deserving to be insulted. They whose mind and habits are degraded, cannot ordinarily be held in subjection without the display of a sternness, which it is often painful for a master to assume, and which to a servant possessing but a slight degree of mental refinement, would be equally intolerable and unnecessary. If the power of enduring harsh treatment be somewhat diminished by mental culture; yet by the same means, the power of estimating kindness is increased. Kindness is often worse than thrown away on vulgar minds. This is entirely owing to the absence of that respectability of feeling induced by education.

Admitting that if servants were somewhat more elevated in the scale of intellect, they would be less disposed to submit to aggression and wrong; yet

this could be no misfortune to those masters who have no wish to inflict wrong. A more accurate perception of relative rights and duties would form a much more stable foundation of contentment than any thing that ignorance can supply. The effect of ignorance, is to open the mind to unfounded suspicion, and to the reception of evil council, by which, men are often led to act under impressions as unjust to the character, as they are injurious to the interests of their employers.

The history of trade's unions, or combinations of workmen for the purpose of obtaining an advance, or preventing a depression of wages, supply no unsuitable illustration of these remarks, while at the same time they furnish an example of the practical mischief of popular ignorance.

We know of only one circumstance that can justify a *turn out*, that is, a selfish combination of masters to maintain a scale of wages unreasonably low. But among the principles which regulate the rate of wages, this holds a very subordinate place. The market for labour, like every other market, is affected by causes over which it rarely happens that an individual party has effectual or immediate control. If, for instance, wages are depressed by a decrease of demand, or an excess of supply, of what use is a combination? This does not meet the evil. It is pure absurdity, and can only be followed by disastrous results.

Such have almost always been the results of the

combinations in question. If successful, the advance established could rarely be maintained; for in most cases, wages in a short time fell lower than before: while the privations experienced during the turn-out, more than counterbalanced the temporary advantage gained. The morals of workmen also very generally suffer at these seasons, in consequence of remaining for a length of time in a state of idleness.

The cessation of business consequent on combinations, has been productive of great mischief to particular places, and to particular branches of trade. Orders have been transferred elsewhere, and the current of manufacture and traffic has taken new directions. In some cases, foreign manufacturers have been benefitted by our folly, and thus the evil has become a national one.

In the present depressed state of trade, we indeed hear little of trade's unions; but should prosperity succeed, as we trust it will, to the present distress; similar scenes will no doubt be reacted, unless more enlightened principles be generally diffused among the working classes.

The reader will perhaps recollect, that the first subject after religious truth which we recommended to the studious attention of a man of business, was the profession or trade, by which he earned his livelihood. We exhorted him to acquire a thorough knowledge of it, in all its branches and bearings, and not be satisfied with manual dexterity in the

practical part, but learn the scientific or philosophical principles which it involves. Such a direction of the mental powers towards one's proper business, would certainly have no tendency to lead to the neglect of it; the very contrary effect might be rationally expected to follow. Nothing would furnish a more direct and powerful stimulus to industry.

Nothing would be likelier to attach a man to his business. Every one feels a pleasure in doing that which he can do well, and which he thoroughly understands. To an intelligent workman, the commonest operations, would recall general principles, and present features of interest, which would quite escape the notice of an ignorant person. It must be acknowledged," says the celebrated founder of Mechanics' Institutes,\* "that greater satisfaction in the execution of machinery must be experienced when the uses to which it may be applied, and the principles upon which it operates, are well understood, than where the manual part alone is known ; the artist remaining ignorant of every thing beside : indeed I have lately had frequent opportunities of observing with how much additional alacrity a piece of work has been undertaken, when the circumstances have been such as I have stated."

And suppose that in addition to the intellectual exercises already noticed, some portion of the leisure were employed in the pursuit of general literature; in reading History, Geography, Memoirs, Poetry,

\*Dr. Birbeck.

Natural Philosophy, &c., we are unable to conceive how this should operate to the injury of industrious habits. An effect altogether opposite, we should rather anticipate from it; that it would cherish an activity of mind, and a habit of redeeming time, while it would act as a refreshing relaxation to the thoughts, after being released from the dull confinement required by attention to business, and by supplying the mind with subjects for meditation, would cause many of those hours of the day when manual labour left the thoughts unemployed, to pass over much more agreeably. Certain it is, that in proportion as the mind is cultivated and enlightened, it will have a much more distinct perception of the value of that respectability and independence, which nothing can confer upon a working man but regular and diligent attention to business. Consequently such a person will have stronger motives to industry than one that is ignorant.

An appeal to facts will abundantly verify these statements. One of the most conspicuous vices of all savage nations is indolence: it is generally found that their aversion to labour bears an exact proportion to their ignorance: and national indolence has invariably been found to give way, in proportion to the advancement of knowledge and civilization. The creation of industrious habits is the first effect of the introduction of arts and sciences. A survey and comparison of European nations will lead to the same conclusion, namely,

that art always follows and keeps pace with science ; industry with knowledge. Does the British nation stand considerably in advance of all her neighbours in point of general intelligence ? She has equally the lead in point of industry. The late Jean Baptist Say, the political economist of France, a man of keen penetration, and wholly unaccustomed to the language of compliment, pronounced us "a nation admirably industrious." The wretchedness of the Irish peasantry with regard to poverty and the want of physical comforts, is well known to be extreme ; their ignorance is equally notorious ; and though the latter is certainly not the sole, yet it is undeniably the principal cause of the former. It is also invariably discovered, that those districts of the same country whose population is most enlightened, are in the most prosperous condition in consequence of their superior industry. This has been remarked of the Cantons of Switzerland, and of the Departments of France. A most strict and decisive demonstration is furnished by the latter country of the salutary influence of education on secular habits and prosperity. The facts have been collected by Baron Dupin, and delivered before the members of the Mechanics' Institute at Paris in his opening lecture.\* The Baron takes a general survey of France as to its industry and productions connected with the arts, in order to point out the superior prosperity of those parts of France in which

\* This Lecture was delivered several years ago.

the inhabitants are educated, over those whose education is neglected. The epitome of his statements amount to this, that generally in the Northern Departments of France, elementary instruction is three times more diffused than in the Southern: and in the former the industry and moral energy and consequent command of wealth and comfort, is greater in about the same proportion than in the latter. This fact is the more striking, as the Southern Departments have decidedly the advantage of the Northern in soil and climate.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

THE following suggestions are offered to the reader as calculated, if adopted, to facilitate that union of study with business we have recommended. We now suppose ourselves addressing persons who are aware of the value of intellectual improvement, and feel the inspiration of strong desire for its attainment. To such, our advice is, *Let your purposes of improvement be confined within practicable limits.*

Hitherto we have, it is true, supposed the appetite for knowledge in the reader to be below par; but man is prone to pass from one extreme to another; and from thinking nothing attainable, some will, by and by, aim at grasping every thing.

If you are disposed to extend your researches into the region of knowledge beyond the frontiers of general reading, we recommend the selection of some one science or branch of philosophy, as your own, and your *only* walk. This advice would not be wholly irrelevant to the professed scholar: many of these would shed a light more intense and more useful too, if their studies were more concentrated. But to the lay student, the principle is much more forcible in its application. Perhaps you have a turn or predilection for some particular study; it may be Mathematics, Chemistry, Languages, Morals, or something else; if so, it is very probable you would succeed better in that department than in any other. Let that be your choice; and if it have a useful bearing on your secular calling, so much the better.

*If you can find or make a companion possessing a taste for intellectual pursuits similar to your own, use your endeavours to do so.* To have an opportunity of discussing the subjects occupying your attention with such a person, you would find highly beneficial. This occasional interchange of thought and suggestion, besides relieving the tedium of reading and study, would tend to give life, accu-

racy, and substance to your acquirements: it would also quicken your energies, and afford you the stimulus of emulation. Conversation, even under disadvantages, is improving; doubly so, when it is mutually interesting and mutually profitable. Perhaps your residence is in some provincial locality; if so, the realization of this object may be doubtful. In many country places it is difficult to find, and equally so to *make* an intelligent companion. Do not however stand upon nice scruples: a friend of the same order or rank as yourself, would, doubtless, be the most agreeable; but let not false modesty deprive you of one higher in life, if you have the opportunity of enjoying such a friend. Still farther be it from you, to let false importance induce you to shun a *superior mind*, although considerably below you in the mere circumstances of life. Your philosophy, not to speak of your christianity, is not worth much, if it has not taught you in such a case to overlook worldly distinctions, and to estimate the true value of man by the qualities of his mind.

*Accustom yourself to express your thoughts on the different subjects of your study, in writing.* The mental effort required in composition, will conduct in a high degree to that intellectual training we are wishful to recommend. If you have native powers, this exercise will call them out; and what is narrow, confused, and immature in your conceptions, it will expand, fill up, and reduce to system. Besides, this practice will afford you an excellent

criterion for improvement. When you can handle a subject yourself, you have a right to believe that you understand it in some good measure: at all events, it will be a means of discovering your deficiencies. To habituate yourself to correct a perspicuous composition, will be an excellent school of grammar, rhetoric, logic, and, we may add, of penmanship: and the power of composition is itself an attainment which bears a high value in the literary world.

*Redeem time from unnecessary sleep; and especially endeavour to acquire the habit of early rising.* Many persons complain of want of time for study, who usually spend nine or ten hours in bed. Now here is as much time wasted, as would be amply sufficient for the extensive cultivation of the mind. From six to eight hours of undisturbed sleep, is quite as much, in ordinary cases, as nature requires.

But if you resolve to abridge your quantum of nightly rest, let it be if possible, your morning hours. Late studies—unhappily too common—are attended with some serious inconveniences. They will, in the first place, often betray you into intemperance of application, by an immoderate prolongation of your studies. For to close a book in which we are deeply interested, or to stop the progress of thought, after it has been fairly set in motion, is often a task of no trifling difficulty. And the mischief will not terminate here: retiring with the mind absorbed in reflection, the power of sleep will

not, perhaps, be at your command ; ideas will linger about the mind, soliciting admission, and often successfully resisting your utmost efforts to banish them. In this manner will be lost the best part of that season, which Divine Providence has appropriated to repose.

And the sleep you do get, will too frequently, from the causes just named, be comparatively unrefreshing; the previously jaded and excited state of your mind, will have the effect of converting sound sleep into dreaming slumber. But besides the discomfort of this practice, it can rarely be persisted in with impunity to the health. Many by this indiscretion, have brought themselves to a premature grave.

But none of these inconveniences will result from early studies. To employ an hour or two before the ordinary labours of the day commence, and after a night of sound repose in devotional and literary exercises, would not only be inoffensive, but in most cases, positively beneficial to health. The faculties would then be lively and vigorous ; capable of strong exertion, without fatigue or injury. And instead of being under the necessity of wholly banishing the ideas you then acquire, they will furnish you with useful and agreeable subjects of meditation in those intervals of the day, in which business dispenses with your attention.

Early rising is important, considered in its religious and moral influence. Commencing the day

with the body refreshed with sound sleep, and the heart and intellect invigorated with devotion and study, you would pass through its subsequent duties with energy and cheerfulness. The important act of well doing with which you began the day, would tend to produce that tranquillity of conscience, or self-satisfaction, which would both render you happy yourself, and enable you to contribute to the happiness of all around you. Even the self-denial necessary to persevering early rising, would materially assist in the establishment of a habit of self-control, by which you would be enabled to obtain moral conquests, still more noble and difficult. Victory inspires confidence and daring; and the achievement of one victory over yourself would encourage you to attempt others. Having surmounted one obstacle, you would be prepared with energy to encounter any other that might present itself before you through the day.

As an opportunity for devotional exercises, the hour that precedes the commencement of business is decidedly the best. Regularly to secure half an hour in the morning for serious reflection, attentive perusal of the Scriptures, and earnest prayer, would insure a state of spiritual prosperity. These early and holy exercises would shed a most hallowing and delightful influence on the spirit; an influence which would seldom be completely dissipated in the subsequent parts of the day.

This consecration of the first fruits of the day to

religious duty, is manifestly due to its supreme importance; it is a sacrifice which, if God do not absolutely require, he will assuredly reward with spiritual blessings. We might therefore expect to find, what is true in fact, that most of those who are eminent for piety and learning, have been accustomed to rise early; and, moreover, that among those who have been remarkable for longevity and firm health, the same practice has been observed.\*

It is worthy of remark also, that the season of which we now speak, is that in which people in general, can be most free from domestic interruptions; and with many it is, in fact, the only part of the day in which they can enjoy this very important advantage.

We must however apprise the reader, who may be disposed to adopt our suggestions, that the practice under consideration, like every other practice which is not "to the satisfying of the flesh," cannot

\* Many distinguished names might be mentioned, who have both practiced and strongly recommended early rising. "My morning hours," says Milton, "are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or conoecting the surfeits of an irregular feast; but up and stirring; in winter ere the sound of any bell awakes me to labour or devotion. In summer, as oft with the bird that first rises, or not much tardier: to read good authors till the attention be weary, or memory have its full freight, and then with useful and generous labours improving the bodies health, and hardness, to render lightsome, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, and to the cares of religion."

be formed into a habit, without strenuous effort and resolute perseverance. Your first difficulty—and if you have no artificial means, it may not be a small one—will be, to awake at the proper time. And we know the disheartened feeling of the young student, who has overslept himself for two or three successive mornings; and thus sees the time lost, on which he has just learnt to place a high value, and his plan of study for the day, irretrievably deranged. Perhaps also, you will for some time at first, be oppressed with drowsiness; and the temperature of your body, if a cold season, may sink considerably below the point of comfort. In addition to this, your friends may deride you as enthusiastic, and, perhaps, complain that you disturb their morning's repose. In these circumstances it will be found necessary to unite prudence with firmness of purpose. But we will venture to affirm, that a single week's judicious and persevering practice, would completely conquer all that is disagreeable in early rising. And remember, that labour or sacrifice is the price at which all true excellence only can be obtained; and if an unusual measure of self-denial is necessary here, it is presumptive evidence, that uncommon advantages are thereby to be realized.

*Learn to perform secular duties with activity and dispatch.* The difference observable in workmen in this particular, is often very striking. Some have the art of getting through a great deal more

work than others in the same time, with the same capacity and strength; and even with little more fatigue: they gain ground, not by dint of muscular effort, but by a judicious application of strength;—by never expending it uselessly;—by never losing time in their transitions from one thing to another, and by application, if not violent, yet vigorous, steady, and persevering. This is, in fact, a habit which is always learnt in early life; and learnt chiefly from the master or fellow-workmen with whom they are first placed. The manner in which they at first strove to adopt, through necessity, or unconsciously imitated, becomes at length easy, and is practiced from preference. This valuable habit may be acquired at a later period of life by suitable endeavours; and it is surely desirable, even for the sake of business: for we generally do that well which we do in an active and vigorous manner. But to those who wish to improve their minds, it is doubly desirable; because it will enable them to secure more time, or to secure it with less loss to business.

*Let not small intervals of time be lost.* Besides the more stated and considerable vacations from business, there usually occurs in almost every day, many small cessations, or a sort of interstitial pauses during the progress of business; and which, on account of their individual insignificance, are generally thrown away. But it should be remembered, that though these fragments of time are singly unimpor-

tant, they may be mighty in their union: many thousands of them added together, would make a large amount.

Suppose you had an income of *five pence per day* bequeathed to you for the term of your life, you might probably treat such a bequest as almost unworthy of acceptance, especially if you had expected something more important; and it would be the easiest thing in the world to trifle away five pence per day, without being perceptibly the better for it, or at all suspected of extravagance. Instead of this, suppose you were to deposit this sum as you get it, in a Saving's Bank, and let it accumulate at compound interest for thirty, or forty years; the amount in the end of that period, would be a moderate fortune, or what would make you comfortable in old age. Now it is possible you have a vacancy of *five minutes* in some part of every day; certainly nothing is more easy than to trifle away five minutes every day, without ever being apparently chargeable with improvidence of time; and you may have been inclined to regard so small an interval as convertible to any purpose of mental improvement. But if you were to set about employing this daily pittance of time in some intellectual exercise, what would it enable you to accomplish in twenty years?—To learn a language, to master a science, or to read some scores of volumes, by which your mind would be enriched with true wisdom.

*Endeavour to obtain the control of your thoughts.* To be able to arrest the progress of reflection, and give it another direction, without difficulty or loss of time, is an attainment singularly important to you whose opportunities of study are irregular in their occurrence, brief in their duration, and subject to many interruptions. The path by which you must arrive at knowledge, is not smooth and straight forward; in which, being once set in motion, you would move with accelerated ease and rapidity; but is rugged and uneven, full of curves and angles: and if you are impelled by a strong excitement, so much the more difficulty will you experience in so frequently stopping your career, and altering your course. You will have need of *flexibility*, as well as firmness of purpose, to enable you to accommodate yourself to your changing circumstances. Perhaps it has cost you no small trouble to get into the track of your subject, and no sooner have you accomplished this, than you are obliged to attend to the calls of business. Or, to employ another comparison, when you have prepared your intellectual repast, spread your table, and have just sit down to enjoy it; then, it may be, you are compelled to rise up and go away. Now to be able to do this without fretting and vexation, is one of the noblest victories of principle over inclination; it is one of the most difficult tasks you will have to learn; and will require a moral energy of a very high order, but one which it is quite possible by divine assistance to obtain.

But as it is natural for the thoughts to linger in the transition from study to business; to descend with reluctance from their elevation; so, when once fairly entangled in secular cares, it is often a matter of equal difficulty to set them free, and teach them to rise to a superior region of intellect. It is evident then, that without a fixed habit of self-command, one half of your leisure will be wasted in a painful conflict between duty and inclination.

*The observance of method and punctuality in your studies, we strongly recommend.* These two things are of the utmost importance in all kinds of business, and they are essential to enable you to make the most of your limited opportunities. Divide your leisure into separate portions, and to each assign a particular pursuit, and let nothing but a weighty reason induce you to depart from the plan you have formed. At the same time you must be aware, that various contingent circumstances will frequently interfere with your plan of study, and subject your leisure to considerable uncertainty and interruption; but when you have thus to bend to unforeseen obstructions, indulge not disquieting impatience, much less the thought of abandoning your system: when thus thrown out of your track, endeavour quietly to regain it as speedily as you can.

*Diligently cultivate the spirit of piety.* And in order to this, you must allow neither business nor

study to rob you of the time which in all reason you ought to appropriate to devotional exercises: and he who is in the diligent pursuit of mental improvement ought to be the last person to grudge time thus employed. For, not to speak of the value of deep and improving piety in other respects, it is to be recollectcd that acts of devotion are improving to the intellect, as well as to the heart; while they prepare you to improve the rest of your leisure to the greatest possible advantage. Piety is the proper source and the most effectual support of that self control and vigour of character, which has been described as so essentially necessary to successful study. The private duties of piety will abundantly compensate you for the time they claim, by conferring ten-fold more value upon the remainder.

*Beware how you cherish as a motive for study, more especially as a principal motive, the intention of escaping from manual labour, and of engaging in some calling, more congenial, as you may suppose, to your improved taste and abilities.*

To entertain such a design is certainly not improper; for very many have by self-education, qualified themselves for, and obtained superior situations; but then, on the other hand, many, with equal abilities, similarly acquired, have not been so fortunate. Unless therefore you have very strong reasons for disliking the calling to which you have been bred, and some very promising opening to another which you believe to be more agreeable,

profitable, and respectable, we would recommend you to be satisfied with, and endeavour to make the best of your present condition. Remember that secular gain is not the only, or even the chief reward of scientific acquirements. We will venture to affirm, that you may realize its principal advantages though you continue to move in a humble sphere.

In all countries, and in all ages, those arts and employments which are deemed common, and which require manual labour, are the most numerous, and necessarily occupy the bulk of mankind. The value of knowledge is in nothing more conspicuous than in the reduction it has made in the amount of labour, not only without diminution of effect, but with an abundance of effect. But even in the most advanced state of society, where science has supplied a thousand mechanical inventions to facilitate labour; has tamed the mighty elements of nature, and employs these tremendous forces in the most ponderous, minute and expeditious operations; and where knowledge is practically demonstrated to be power, in a sense more literally extensive than even Bacon himself contemplated; yet still, the greatest part of mankind cannot be released from physical labour. No imaginable command of natural agents—no conceivable improvements in machinery which may hereafter take place, can enable us to till the ground, to perform arts and crafts, to carry on trade and commerce, without considerable mus-

cular effort. Many of the duties connected with the learned professions, are almost equally oppressive to the physical, as to the mental powers; and it is probable that no expedient will ever be devised, by which those superior classes will be enabled to dispense with the corporeal inconveniences of their professions. Now, that arrangement of Divine Providence, whereby the necessity of labour is thus imposed upon the bulk of mankind, may be regarded as a sure indication, that such a condition is, upon the whole, the best of any for man, or most conducive to his happiness. The opinion that labour is wholly an evil or curse, is clearly a mistaken one. If true, it would stand as an exception to that otherwise general and most merciful law of our being, namely, that the exercise of all our animal functions is, upon the whole, a source of pleasure. It is most certain that the exercise of "dressing and keeping" the garden of paradise, would as naturally be productive of pleasure to our first parents, as the exercise of eating and drinking, seeing and smelling. The exercise of our senses is still pleasurable, although in consequence of sin, that pleasure is now considerably diminished, and indeed often attended with disagreeable emotions.

But it is to be remembered that the pleasure is general; the pain accidental, and occasional. In like manner, the pleasure arising from muscular effort, is not so exquisite, as it would be before the body was enfeebled by disease. Labour now be-

comes disagreeable when it is in any measure oppressive. Yet even now a moderate degree of labour is essential to happiness. Facts demonstrate this. You observe that all children delight in exercise, and often in that which is violent; and that those whom circumstances release from the necessity of business, generally resort to exertion in the way of sport. It is undeniable also that the most industrious always appear to be the most contented and happy; while the idle and inactive, invariably betray unequivocal symptoms of misery.

One reason among others why moderate bodily labour contributes so materially to happiness is, that it contributes essentially to our health and to the proper enjoyment of food and rest. God, indeed, pronounced a curse on the labour of man; but he also cursed the ground for man's sake, as almost all his other natural blessings. But none of these things are on that account rendered wholly evil. If the ground bring forth thorns and thistles—the fruits of the curse, still it remains of the highest value to man; and labour, on the same account, is often now the occasion of pain; yet it must still be numbered among our highest blessings.

From these considerations you will see how little reason you have to cherish uneasy wishes to be set free from labour, for its own sake, and how very much reason you have for believing, that that condition, which though it impose toil, yet leaves you many opportunities for religious and intellectual

exercise, is perhaps, more conducive to your happiness than any other in which you could be placed.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### MENTAL IMPROVEMENT IN ITS INFLUENCE ON PIETY.

THERE are persons—and they are very numerous—who are enthusiastically devoted to literature, but manifest a stupid insensibility to, or a supercilious contempt for the claims and importance of religion. There is another class, perhaps equally numerous, who are sincerely pious, but wholly unconscious of the value of learning, of any description; ignorant that it is a powerful auxiliary to piety, and that its attainment, so far as they possess the means, is to be ranked among religious duties; and of course this duty, to their great spiritual injury, though without the least remorse, they wholly neglect.

To each of these characters we purpose separately to direct a few observations. We shall endeavour to convince both, that they are guilty of great practical errors: they put asunder what God

hath joined together; and though the error of the former has, for obvious reasons, more guilt, and of course, more danger in it; yet the other is absurd, and injurious in a very high degree.

Between sound learning and virtue there is so vital an affinity, that they are mutually necessary to each others well-being, and cannot be separated without injury to both. When piety is combined with considerable ignorance, it labours under the greatest of all natural disadvantages, and cannot exhibit its proper beauty and grandeur; and without some degree of intelligence, it cannot even exist. On the other hand, piety, or moral rectitude is the glory, the reward, and the proper and ultimate end of learning: the latter may indeed exist without the former; but then it wants the only thing that can guide it to practical utility. It would exist only as a dangerous maniac, with the power to do unspeakable mischief, and without the inclination to do good. When learning is combined with piety, it partakes of its very nature, and consequently of all its sanctity and value: separate from it, it is worthless at best, but capable, in proportion to the amount of vice with which it is associated, to be applied to the most destructive purposes.

That education is most favourable in its influence on the general morals of mankind, every attentive observer of society will bear witness; the facts are so common and striking which apply to the case, that it is impossible for any one to arrive at an op-

posite conclusion. From *one* single source, ample confirmation of the truth of this doctrine may be obtained, and that is, the history of criminal convictions. It is well known, that nine-tenths of the greatest part of criminals are wholly destitute of education; and if ignorance clearly leads to crime, knowledge must have an opposite tendency. And accordingly, it rarely happens that the more detestable crimes and vices are committed by well informed persons, much less by those who have any considerable share of learning. Darkness is the proper element of vice; but the clearest intellectual light is most congenial to virtue.

To instruct a person in his duties, is obviously necessary to enable him rightly to perform them; and it is certainly the first and most effectual means towards inducing him to do so. For though the passions, when corrupt, and exposed to dangerous incitements, will sometimes go astray in the clearest light; yet in the absence of such light, they may be expected to diverge, both more readily and more widely from the path of virtue: for in that case they may be equally vicious, and they are *blind* as well as vicious. A clear knowledge of the obligations and advantages of virtue, and of the guilt and mischief of vice, will in numberless cases, prove a sufficient counteraction to criminal inclinations, and in many others it will break the violence, and give to crime a less offensive character.

It is to be observed also, that learning opens

sources of pleasure wholly innocent themselves, and very much tending to render man independent of those gross gratifications by which the worst passions are cherished. The business of cultivating the mind, not only supersedes corrupting pleasures, but corrupting company also, by rendering retirement necessary, or inducing him to seek the company of the intelligent, who are commonly respectable in point of morals. The very exertion necessary to the attainment of literature, is naturally favourable to the production of habits of industry, consideration, and self-control; while it is itself a virtue of the highest order.

But education, when rightly conducted, is favourable to general morals, principally by its tendency to promote piety. Some discussion will however be necessary here. The nature and extent of that influence which education and knowledge exercise on piety, involve questions of somewhat difficult solution, since all the facts which bear on this point are not perfectly harmonious in their evidence. Established principles, supported by the great mass of examples, would lead to the decided belief, that education must be powerfully and most desirably influential on religion. But on the other hand, we have too many examples of learning exerting no such influence, and even combined with the greatest wickedness. These latter instances, however, we hope to show to be merely exceptions, and capable of being accounted for without any preju-

dice to the principle we assume, namely, the naturally favourable bearing of knowledge on piety and virtue.

It may be necessary first of all to observe, that in our consideration of knowledge as it affects morals, we refer chiefly to the knowledge of moral truth: to an acquaintance with God as the great moral governor of the world, and to a knowledge of ourselves in our relations to God and our fellow creatures, together with the dispositions and duties arising out of these relations. At the same time it is to be recollected, that physical science in general, although available chiefly to secular purposes, and studied generally with only secular views, has a powerful bearing on religion by the illustration it affords of the Divine character; while history is subservient to the same purpose, as it displays the providence of God, and the character of man. It must also be understood, that science or knowledge is, in itself, neither good nor evil, morally considered; and only becomes the one or the other as it is united with a good, or an evil disposition. Its proper character, morally considered, is that of a *means*; although, even as such, it is not necessarily conducive to virtue, and only becomes so when sanctified by the special energy of the Holy Spirit. Such is the deplorable degeneracy of the human soul, that it is truly represented as "dead in trespasses and sins;" and even this very strong representation fails to express the full extent of man's moral wretchedness: for the

soul is not only dead, or destitute of any proper feeling on religious subjects, but it is actuated by feelings of bitter hostility against God and his laws. Now, to remove this spiritual apathy,—to overcome this inbred and malignant enmity, is a work far surpassing any natural means; it can only be effected by the special energy of the Divine Spirit. Nevertheless, in most cases this divine power is communicated by outward means. "Faith cometh by hearing the word of God;" faith, in other words, is founded upon that knowledge of divine truth which can only be obtained by hearing or reading the word of God. As a means then to the attainment of holiness, knowledge may be shewn to possess a commanding and an indispensable importance.

Piety or moral rectitude in principle, is that state of the affections in which God is supremely loved and desired as the highest good, and every other object in proportion to its relative importance, or the influence we believe it to have on our happiness. Now, however distinct this may be from knowledge, it cannot exist without it. The understanding is the basis of all rational affections; for until God be known to be a good Being, he cannot be loved at all; and unless he be known to be the best of Beings, he cannot be supremely loved. Nor can the affections and desires towards other objects be correctly regulated without a knowledge of the relative importance of these objects. So that with whatever propriety the affections may be called the

springs of action, it is plain that they could have no power at all, at least no useful power, without knowledge. Or if we choose to consider the affections as the sole source of moral power, yet knowledge is necessary to give it a right direction.

Equally important is the bearing of knowledge on practical holiness, which implies such a regulation of the conduct as accords with the revealed will of God, and is calculated in the most effectual manner to promote our highest happiness, and that of our fellow creatures. And here the rule of duty must first of all be known, before any efforts can be made to conform to it: the proper course must be ascertained, before any of the agents or stimulants of motion can be safely set to work. And the province of knowledge is not to guide merely; it has obviously an impelling power; it gives to motives strength, as well as direction. The authority of God, and the present and eternal consequences of obedience or disobedience cannot possibly possess the force of motives, unless they are known; nor can they become very strongly influential, unless they are very clearly apprehended.

Conscience, which implies the power of discriminating between right and wrong, and the recognition of an all-observing and retributive Deity, has clearly its seat in the intellectual faculty. In children, it is observable that conscience, or the moral faculty, unfolds itself exactly as the intellect opens; and though in the absence of moral culture, conscience

may not keep pace with intellect, yet no kind of training can place it in advance.

When we address people who are very ignorant on the subject of religion, our first business is to supply them with the principles of religious knowledge. We must apply ourselves to their understandings, recollecting that persuasion is useless, if not preceded by instruction. They must be told that there is a just and holy God, whose creatures they are, and against whom they have sinned;—that they are in a state of guilt, misery, and danger. The gospel must be explained to them as the grand and only method for the recovery of man from the present dominion, and future consequences of sin; its promises and privileges must be unfolded to them, together with the rules or laws which it gives for the regulation of our conduct. And to aim at any thing like persuasion or excitement before suitable instruction is imparted, is worse than useless. It is very possible to rouse the passions of the ignorant, even on religious subjects; but blind zeal, always headstrong and misleading, is often peculiarly so in matters over which conscience claims authority.

Now if knowledge be thus necessary to the *existence* of piety, it must be equally necessary to its subsequent growth. If it constitute the capacity of religion, the expansion of the latter cannot take place, without a suitable enlargement of the former. If, in other words, it is the foundation of virtue, the broader and stronger that foundation is, the more

lofty a superstructure may be erected upon it. "True religion is founded in sentiment." Nothing can be more dangerous than the opinion which some hold, that it is of little or no consequence what a man believes, if his life be right. But it would be very difficult to prove how the life can be right, if there be no fixed principles in the mind ; or if those principles are erroneous. When a man is uninfluenced by principles, and acts without thought, according to the motives which for the moment are presented to his mind, his conduct must be variable and undecided. As all sciences have all their axioms or first principles, from which all their various branches and parts are deduced, so it is scarcely to be supposed that religion is so vague and uncertain a thing as to be any thing or nothing, just as the prejudices and humours, the customs and habits of men would make it. "A genuine revival of religion," observes another writer, "is characterized by a due proportion of reflection and feeling." I will not undertake to decide what amount of scripture knowledge is necessary to conversion in any given case, or to question the fact, that men under certain circumstances may be renewed when their knowledge is very limited; nevertheless it is certain that religious reflection precedes religious feeling in the order of nature. Before men can feel remorse, much more contrition for their sins, they must have held strongly to their minds the fact that they are sinners. They must have reflected upon what it is to be a sinner;—on

the character of God, not only as a Father, but a Law-giver;—on the reasonableness of their obligations to him, and on the guilt of violating those obligations. Before they can exercise faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, they must have reflected on the character of Christ, on the fulness of his atonement, and on the freeness and sincerity of the gospel offer. The holy Spirit employs the truth not only in the work of sanctification, but even in the work of conversion; and the truth can never find its way to the heart, except through the understanding. If then, the great truths of God's Word are steadily held up before the mind as subjects of reflection, and if the feeling which is manifested by sinners, whether of anxiety and distress, or of peace and joy, be the effect of such reflection, there is good reason to believe that God's Spirit is really at work, and that which claims to be a revival, is really one. But if in such a scene, the mind is kept in a great degree passive; if there be a great deal of feeling with very little thought—burning heat with only dim or doubtful light—if the sensibilities of the soul be wrought into a storm, none can tell how, or why; then rely on it, it is not a work which God owns; or, if there are some true conversions, far the greater number may be expected to prove spurious."

But if we were doubtful whether the cultivation of the mind ought to be regarded as a direct means of grace, yet as a general duty, its omission or performance must exercise an influence on personal

piety, similar to that of the neglect or performance of the other unquestioned duties. And if it can be shown that this is a duty of paramount importance, and imposing upon us obligations peculiarly binding, it necessarily follows, that its connexion with religion must be peculiarly intimate and important.

If a farmer should through mere sloth, neglect the cultivation of his land, and the management of his cattle, and by this means deprive himself and his dependents of that respectability, and those comforts and means of usefulness which suitable diligence would have secured; every one would be ready to charge such a man with a most criminal dereliction of duty, and to believe, that with the guilt of this remissness upon him, he could not be eminently pious, if pious at all; for it would be recollected no man can be holy without the special influence of the Divine Spirit, and that the Spirit will not take up his residence, and carry on his work in the heart of one who is thus guilty of gross and unceasing unfaithfulness. But the mind itself is an estate of incomparable value, and susceptible of infinitely greater improvement than any farm, or business whatever.

And from the cultivation of the mind also arises the power of benefitting our species in the most important and extensive manner. All those talents, the exertion of which must deeply and widely affect the real welfare of our fellow creatures, depend on education. These considerations, then, must clear-

ly evince the work of cultivating the understanding to the utmost of our power, to be a duty yielding to none in the weight of its claims. That a person can wilfully neglect this duty and yet be truly pious, is not very easy to believe; and that such a man should attain any considerable eminence in grace, is impossible. He is guilty of burying the noblest talent that God has given him, and thus of grieving the Holy Spirit, without whose unceasing help he can do nothing.

On this subject we are particularly anxious to arrest the attention of the religious part of our readers. Every one may have observed among the lower classes of the religious world, a very prevalent ignorance or disregard of the value of mental culture, as it affects piety: few of them appear to have any conception that it is a direct means of grace; and many are not even aware that it is a duty at all. The effects of this barrenness of intellect, and the neglect of all expedients for its remedy on their piety, are very observable: for in the absence of the strong and steady impulse arising from principle and conviction, such characters are compelled incessantly to hunt after excitement. Whatever is novel, rousing and impassioned delights them; noise and bustle is their element; nor can they listen patiently to the most instructive discourse, if it happens to be delivered in a calm and sober manner. That the religious course of such persons should be marked with irregularity and too frequent scandals, is

quite to be expected. As rationally might flame be expected to support itself without combustion, vegetation to thrive upon a rock, or a pyramid to stand upon its point, as eminent attainments in piety to co-exist with gross and wilful ignorance.

The important connexion of religious knowledge with religious experience and practice, and the duty of seeking the former as a grand means of improvement in the latter, we should be glad to hear more frequently insisted upon from the pulpit. So far as our observations have extended, the subject appears to be very much lost sight of. Rarely is the business of self-education avowedly placed under the jurisdiction of conscience; and, in this view, enforced with the frequency and seriousness of a religious duty. Other parts of human conduct, immeasurably less important, are constantly thus placed. The whole duty of man, from the highest act of devotion down to matters of mere expediency and prudential import, are regularly brought forward in the pulpit, while the great duty of cultivating the intellect, a duty most deeply affecting our own condition and that of others, both in the present and future world, is usually left to be supported by secular motives only. We are often reminded of the awful character we sustain, as "stewards of the manifold gifts of God;" and that "it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." We are told that property, power, influence, as well as moral qualities, are talents highly improveable,

capable of most beneficial application, and imposing upon us a very solemn responsibility. But we seldom hear this doctrine in its application to mental culture: numbers do not know, because they have never been told, that their understanding is a talent for the improvement of which they are accountable to God. That the ministerial defect here complained of is generally prevalent we do not undertake to affirm; for beyond the range of personal observation, we know not how the case may stand.

To young converts—more especially if they are young in years as well as in grace—the work of self-education, in its bearing on personal religion and general usefulness, should be warmly and specially recommended. They should be strongly reminded that the intellectual faculty, and the power of acquiring knowledge, are the noblest of those talents by the due improvement and exercise of which they may glorify God and serve their fellow creatures; and that useful knowledge, both in its acquirement and application, is conducive in a high degree to personal piety, as it secures them from the temptation of wasting their hours of relaxation in sloth, or of resorting to idle company or conversation: and on the other hand, as it communicates the power and the opportunity of exercising virtuous dispositions.

To induce such characters to regard the acquisition of useful knowledge, and of religious knowledge

especially, as an important duty ; and to press them to commence in good earnest, a steady and judicious course of reading and study, would be the likeliest means to give permanency and stability to their religious feeling, and value to their character. And the benefit would not terminate upon them ; it would redound to the general edification of the church, by increasing both in value and amount that agency which the Divine Being is pleased to employ for that purpose. The love of God shed abroad in the heart, invariably produces the most expanded benevolence to man ; hence it is natural for the subjects of this grace, to long to be useful to their fellow creatures. Young men, especially those who become pious, generally manifest a disposition to engage in some of the public departments of religious effort ; the motive, in most cases may be excellent, but it is too often misguided in its application. Little idea seems to be entertained by many, that intellectual attainments must be united with piety, in order to extensive public usefulness ; and hence, instead of beginning at the right end—that is, applying their zeal to the acquisition of useful talents, and waiting until they have secured a tolerable stock of knowledge and some maturity of judgment, as well as some growth and stability in religion ; they undertake, wholly unprepared as they are, the performance of the most difficult duties, and which they are of course unable to perform, either to the satisfaction or profit of the people. Fre-

quently too there are in such characters very observable symptoms, either of vanity and self-confidence, or of a presumptive dependence on divine aid—both the offspring of ignorance.

The existence of such unqualified functionaries, either in the capacity of preachers, or in any public religious capacity, is a serious misfortune to the cause of Christianity. For men to set up to be teachers, who themselves have "need to be taught which be the first principles of the oracles of God," can answer no purpose but that of bringing religion into contempt. To a considerate mind it cannot but be a subject of great grief, to see so many young men professing to be members of the christian church, and possessing talents, which if properly cultivated, would enable them to be eminently useful; trifling away their leisure in idleness or folly, wholly destitute of any conviction that learning would greatly assist their usefulness, and appearing to have no more idea that God requires them to cultivate their minds than to fly in the air. We cannot but express our decided belief, that so general a disregard of self-education by religious characters could not exist, if the subject were not extensively forgotten in the pulpit.

It is very probable that many will hesitate to adopt our views on this subject, from the consideration of the many instances in which eminent learning may be seen entirely separate from pious feeling, or evidently contributing nothing towards its improvement.

These instances however, although admitted to be numerous, it will not be difficult to account for without any injury to our argument. They indeed prove that learning may exist independently of piety; but by no means that piety can be separated from learning, since the reverse of this rests on the basis of intuitive certainty, and no kind or number of instances whatever can possibly overthrow it. For though knowledge, considered in itself, is not virtue; yet it is one of the essential elements of virtue, and cannot therefore in any case be essentially adverse to it.

But we have viewed knowledge in the light of a *means* towards the production or improvement of moral principle: now it would be obviously improper to argue, that because as a means, it is not *invincibly effective*, it has therefore no natural efficiency at all. The truth is, its religious influence, although powerful and salutary, may be partially or wholly counteracted by innate depravity, aided by external circumstances; that is, by the counter-working of influences strongly hostile. Unhappily the manner in which knowledge is too generally sought and communicated, sufficiently accounts for the absence of religious effect.

Many systems of education are framed as if for the purpose of neutralizing both its moral and religious tendency. In some cases, with the lore of science, the student is made insensibly to imbibe the poison of infidelity: in others, the intellectual

draught is mingled with licentious and demoralizing principles, and, generally speaking, there is the absence of that diligent moral training, that moral application of knowledge, which is necessary to develop and facilitate its favourable influence on virtue. Piety towards God often occupies, if a place at all, only a very subordinate and unobservable one: it is manifestly treated as a matter of minor importance; christian motives are not held out as a stimulus to industry, nor is the reciprocal influence of knowledge and piety even specifically and strongly adverted to. These grand errors in the communication of knowledge, sufficiently account for the majority of examples in which it can be shewn to be entirely powerless in its moral tendency.

Besides, the attention of many persons is directed solely towards the acquisition of sciences purely secular, such as Mathematics, Civil History, Philology, &c.; and it cannot be expected that the study of these, to the neglect of all moral subjects, should possess any observable measure of the influence in question, much less that that influence should result from the reading of Novels, Newspapers, &c.

But it will be alleged that learning, or the pursuit of learning, is often pernicious in its religious effect, by supplying incentives to pride and ambition, as well as impairing the spirituality of the mind by its excessive occupation of the thoughts; and, in a word, by betraying the student into all

without them, or even of blaming the great Author of nature for making them capable of being turned to mischievous purposes. Such perversions of natural blessings, and of knowledge amongst the rest, are in most cases, solely chargeable on the perverse propensities of man; and no blame can be attached to God unless he were to blame for making man a free agent, and, of course, capable of doing evil. The mischief which invariably flows from the abuse of natural good, doubtless originates in the express appointment of the moral Governor of the world; but this only exhibits him as *just*, in thus attaching punishment to crime, and as *merciful*, in making that punishment a barrier to its commission.

## CHAPTER X.

### INFLUENCE OF PIETY ON THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

We shall now reverse the subject; and from the consideration of learning, as it affects piety and morals, proceed to contemplate the influence of piety on learning. Having shewn, satisfactorily we trust, that the latter as it leads us to an acquaintance with the perfections and moral government of God, and with our own character and condition, naturally tends to produce humility, confidence and pious feelings in general: it is proper for us also to show that devotional feelings, in their turn, strongly tend to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, and to render that knowledge a source of greater happiness to ourselves and of usefulness to others. After having pointed out how extensively religion is dependent on knowledge, it is but just at the same time to shew, that knowledge is under equal obligations to religion.

In illustration of this point, the following observations are offered.

1. *Piety often solely, or materially contributes to the production of a taste for learning.* A concern for salvation always awakens a spirit of enquiry; it brings into action the reasoning and imaginative powers of the mind, and by these means introduces the individual into the intellectual world. And from the habit of thinking thus acquired, and the glimmering of the truth thus let into the mind, many are induced to continue the exercise of a power and the pursuit of a pleasure equally new. Besides, when a person becomes religious, he is cut off from vain and corrupting amusement; and thus circumstanced, books and literature naturally offer themselves as suitable to replenish the vacuum by this means occasioned, and they are found to supply amusements altogether suited to his sober habits. Moreover, this improvement of his mind by the acquisition of useful knowledge, he now discovers to be a duty which God requires of him, not only for the sake of his own spiritual prosperity, but for the sake of being useful to others.

2. *Piety directs in the pursuit of learning; or, in other words, it is the safest guide in the selection of studies.* This may not be so important a matter, where an experienced adviser is accessible; but the reader is aware that *self-education* is our specific subject, and this necessarily supposes the default of such an advantage; and when religious principle is wanting also, the individual has a bad

chance of adopting a judicious course of study. He must then be directed by secular motives only; or, perhaps, by idle curiosity, licentious passions, or mere caprice or humour.

It is under the influence of such incentives as these, that so many consume their time, corrupt their hearts, and abuse literary taste, by devoting themselves to romance or news, to idle speculation or petulant controversy. Or, if they commence the study of some important science, perhaps it is one, the study of which is unsuitable to their genius or opportunities, and the application of which belongs to a condition very different from their own. Now we may affirm that religious principle, although it will not supersede the advice of friends, or suggest the whole minutiae of what is proper in the direction of studies; will generally preserve a person from the errors we have mentioned. Piety releases the soul from the influence of passion and caprice, and puts it under the direction of common sense; and rarely does this faculty mislead in ordinary matters, when its decisions are uninterfered with by prejudice, and its suggestions steadily followed. Common sense would forbid a person from wasting time in picking up the toys or chasing the butterflies of literature; much less would it permit him to swallow its poison for the sake of its agreeable taste and appearance. It would teach him to direct his attention to those branches of knowledge the attainment of which is adapted to his op-

portunities and turn of mind, and which are the most promising with regard to practical utility, in preference to those which, without such recommendations, are more inviting in their appearance.

3. *Piety facilitates the acquisition of knowledge.* The cultivation of the mind under any circumstance involves considerable difficulty; but the business of self-cultivation is peculiarly arduous; to prosecute it successfully, demands no inconsiderable measure of self-denial, diligence, and resolute perseverance. But these are lessons which can nowhere be so effectually learned, as in the school of the Gospel; and none fail to learn them who enter that school. Here the mind acquires that activity, that contempt of ease and grovelling pleasure, that patience of hardships and difficulty, that honesty and singleness of purpose, and that happy freedom from the embarrassing influence of wayward passion, which are of the greatest value in the pursuit of knowledge. The natural love of knowledge aided by ambition, is indeed often said to produce ardour in its acquirement; but the christian, while he may possess all that is innocent, and, of course, all that is truly valuable in these incentives; is influenced also by motives far more elevated and stable, namely a regard to the will of God, and to the eternal consequences, as it respects both himself and others, which may result from the faithful improvement and exercise of his talents.

4. *Piety enhances the value of learning, by*

*making it a source of nobler personal enjoyment.* There is a pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge which may be called natural, or purely intellectual, and that is independent of religious considerations; in this pleasure the profane participate as well as the christian; yet there are delightful associations connected with scientific researches and discoveries, known only to the latter. While the christian philosopher tastes all that is innocent and noble in what may be called the natural pleasure of knowledge; while he is fully alive to all that is grand, beautiful, and useful in the physical world, and admires with the utmost warmth the interminable variety, and exquisite arrangements of its objects; yet his highest pleasure arises from his recognition of the finger of God in natural phenomena: in contemplating the character of Deity as impressed on the face of Creation. However his mind may be impressed with admiring wonder by the glorious array of beings which form the universe, and what is vast or exquisite in the several individuals composing it, with still greater astonishment and awe does he reflect on that **MIGHTY INTELLECT** who designed and executed the complicated fabric. To such a person, every natural object is invested with a ten-fold interest, as it is a sort of representation of the glorious Being in whose favour he is interested; and he views it with something like the feelings of a lover surveying the production of a friend, which is at once a specimen of uncommon skill, and a token of special

favour. In short, philosophy disconnected from religious considerations, he would deem a poor, lame, imperfect thing.

An irreligious student of nature terminates all his inquiries in subordinate agents and second causes; or if conviction force him to recognize the agency of a Superior Power, it is the unwilling and heartless recognition of one, who has no interest in the favour of his Creator; and as he would feel happier if he could believe that there is no God at all, his speculations serve only to torment him by fixing upon him a conviction which it is painful to him to entertain. While the christian surveys and examines the universe with feelings like those with which a favoured son would survey the domains to which he was heir, the unbeliever roams over the territories of science with the chagrined and imbibited emotion with which a disgraced culprit would explore the country of which he was an out-law, and from which he was about to be expelled. The religious man pursues his studies under the delightful impression that he is by this means rising in the scale of being, and is thus qualifying himself for more extensive usefulness in this world, and exalting his condition in the next. But to all such anticipation, the wicked man is an entire stranger. His studies derive no grandeur from the idea of immortality; from immortality he has nothing to hope, and every thing to fear; and all the influence which his scientific acquirements have on his eternal condition, is to expose

him to greater punishment proportioned to his augmented responsibility.

5. *Education considered as a means of doing good, or a talent for public usefulness, is materially dependent on piety.* Knowledge is power; and as such, it is valuable in its practical application only in proportion to the quantum of virtue with which it is associated and wielded. Possessed by a person who is a stranger to the principles and spirit of Christianity, and of course to true benevolence, it is as dangerous as poison in the hands of a child, or as a sword in that of a madman. But it will be said that many who are destitute of real religion, are known to exercise great talents in a most beneficial manner. To this we reply, that the prospect of worldly gain or favour induces many persons to act in a manner very different to that which their natural inclinations would prompt them; but it is very clear that worldly motives and principles of mere expediency, constitute a very insecure and tottering basis of practical virtue. If it should happen, as it often does in fact, that a man has no particular worldly interest to secure by the exercise of his mental powers, he is then left to follow the unobstructed bent of his mind, and if this is perverted, if he is uninfluenced by conscience, and the creature of passion, he can only be expected to "move to confusion, and operate to mischief." In other cases it may appear to be a person's interest to employ his talents in a vicious manner, and when his propensities sti-

mulate him in the same direction, there is nothing to withstand this double incentive to the mischievous application of his powers.

It is moreover believed that with regard to many of those examples of beneficence, to the production of which religious principle is supposed to contribute nothing great; mistakes are committed, and that in some of them, the credit of what is good is chiefly due to this very cause. Few even of those who are accounted irreligious are completely so; they have some degree of the fear of God; and conscience has sufficient influence over them, if not to make them decidedly pious, yet to restrain them from much evil, and excite them to the performance of many actions. We indeed believe that most men have suffered more from the original apostacy, than their outward conduct would seem to indicate, yet we are equally convinced that the greater part of mankind are more indebted to the restraining and restoring grace of God, than either themselves are willing to allow, or others are aware of. It is from this struggle, so generally experienced, between conscience and the corrupt passions, that so many characters present so doubtful an aspect, and manifest so much inconsistency in their conduct.

With regard to that learning or talent which is properly secular, and is wholly applied to secular purposes; temporal interest, or mere selfishness, is usually sufficient to secure its right application; yet even this is the more valuable as a means of pub-

lic good; when united with the christian virtues of fidelity, prudence, and industry. But we chiefly refer to that talent, the exercise of which affects the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind, and nothing can guide this aright but conscientious and heartfelt piety. Let all the motives that mere expediency can muster, be arrayed on the side of truth and virtue, and they will be insufficient to curb the ebullitions of sceptical and unsanctified genius. But expediency too often coincides with inclination, and the taste of the public is as licentious as that of the writer; and the movements of a mind thus stimulated to evil from without, as well as from within, must be fatal and disastrous in the extreme.

If any should question whether genius is a dangerous thing when combined with a depraved heart, we might be disposed to advise them to consult the productions of Voltaire, Chesterfield, Lord Byron, and others of the same irreligious and prostitute class, did we not fear that the experiment, besides settling this question with them, would inflict injury on their morals.

Those however who demand proof that intellectual ability is chiefly indebted to religious principle for the utility of its practical application, we would direct with confidence to the writings and exertions of Baxter and Wesley, of Owen and Tillotson, of Young and Cowper, and many others whose extensive usefulness was clearly attributable to the religi-

ous benevolence which at once excited and directed the exercise of their talents.

The preceding considerations we would strongly recommend to the notice of those who systematically exclude religion from their philosophical pursuits, as well as to another very numerous class, who permit their eagerness in study to supersede *that*, which conscience, if allowed to speak, would tell them is "the one thing needful." That there are many such students is too evident from the fact, that there are many *teachers* of the above description. In numberless cases, education is formally disunited from piety as from something that would contaminate and degrade it. Vast numbers of books have been written on subjects connected with physical science, with morals, and even with education exclusively, in which scarcely any reference is made to the authority and agency of the Divine Being. In some cases when religion is permitted to make her appearance, we are only favoured with an indirect and momentary glance: the writer appears as if he were ashamed of what he is doing, and betrays evident suspicion that he is offending the taste of his readers.

Now, as it can be so clearly shewn that religion is in every respect friendly to true philosophy; the propensity thus manifested of separating the former from the latter, and of contemplating science in all its bearings, except that which it has on the character and requirements of the Divine Being, and the

spiritual condition of man, can only be explained on the principle of that carnality of mind which "is enmity against God." No fact in man's moral history bears stronger testimony to the deep degeneracy of his nature. And the *folly* of such conduct is equal to its profaneness. If it is certain that in the formation of the Universe, the Almighty designed the manifestation of his own perfections, as well as the physical accommodation of his creatures; and if it can be demonstrated that the former was his *principal* design, inasmuch as the spiritual, and therefore the highest happiness of man is thereby promoted; then it clearly follows that the study of physical science, that is, of the objects and processes of the natural world, together with the laws by which they are regulated, ought to be conducted with a constant reference to this grand design of the Creator. If it be true, that the display of the perfections of Deity was the principal object contemplated in creation; then, to observe the perfections thus displayed, should be the primary object in the study of Creation. If that "fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom," and that love to God which is the soul of holiness, are built on the knowledge of God, then to obtain that knowledge is the highest duty of man, and the noblest reward of mental application.

An irreligious philosopher is a perfect anomaly. If a person of ordinary taste and judgment were shewn a pattern or statue of exquisite workmanship,

his first remark would be, Who is the author of it? and his expression of admiration would at least, be equally divided betwixt the performance and the genius of the artist. But the character above named, exhibits a strange and singular destitution of this very natural feeling of interest and admiration, relative to the author of any grand execution. And when it is considered that his feelings are like those of other men, so far as subordinate agents and second causes are concerned, his conduct in this particular can only arise from inveterate prejudice and intolerable enmity against God. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God."

With what astonishment and indignation we may well suppose, must angels behold a race of beings like this, placed as they are, in a world abounding with displays of Almighty power and wisdom, surrounded with the wonderful works of God. To see them ardently engaged in exploring the great system of nature, acute in tracing effects to their causes, and alive to all that is delicate or grand in the objects around them; and never, or very rarely, lifting their minds to the contemplation of the Stupendous Intelligence by which the complicated machine of nature is created and set in motion; and utterly unmindful of, and unaffected with those displays of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, so eminently conspicuous in the world around them. "How," they would say, "can that

astronomer survey the planetary system, and not be struck with the Omnipotence which wields, and the skill that guides these mighty orbs! How can the naturalist examine the structure, the instinct, and the habits of animals, and observe the striking adaptation of the same to their several circumstances and uses, and not be filled with the 'meridian evidence' of the existence and providence of God, which must put all doubts to flight! By what unaccountable fatuity do these beings terminate all their enquiries in second causes, and never permit their thoughts to ascend to the Great First Cause of all things:—Himself the perfection of being, and the knowledge of whom is the noblest and most necessary of all sciences!"

In this manner may we imagine the spotless intelligences above, expressing their astonishment at the greatest of all the absurdities connected with human conduct, namely, the possession and the ardent pursuit of learning, in the complete absence of pious feeling.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MENTAL CULTURE IN ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

AMONG all barbarous nations, the condition of woman is found to be relatively degraded: this is a circumstance to be expected, where nothing pertaining to the intellect or the disposition is appreciated. In the rude bosom of the savage there is little sympathy with those domestic charities which are the balm of civilized life. Muscular power and prowess are, with such persons, the principal attributes commanding attention; and, not possessing these, no wonder that the gentler sex should fall below their proper level, and even come to be considered as a sort of inferior being. It may therefore naturally be expected, that when civilization, or christianity (which is civilization in its most perfect form) extends its influence, woman will recover her position in society. When men acquire just views of human worth, and are taught to measure it by its proper standard, namely the qualities of the mind and the heart, not by the dimensions of the corpo-

real frame, or by the mere exploits of animal strength; in the same proportion woman rises in the scale of public opinion, assumes an importance peculiarly her own,—an importance little, if any, below that which attaches to man. In the mere point of intellect, it is not found that the female is at all beneath her rougher companion; and there are other points in which she is clearly a gainer by comparison. In strength and tenacity of affection; in the power of giving charms to society; perhaps we may add, in general moral worth as considered in a negative point of view, we must decidedly give place to our fair companions.

If the comparative power which the two sexes possess over human happiness be considered, it may be difficult to decide whether is the greatest. Man usually moves in a wider sphere, and acts on a more extended scale, and therefore his share in the production of happiness is more obviously seen, and may therefore appear to be of more weight and consequence. Woman contributes to the sum of human comfort in a more silent and unobtrusive manner; but perhaps with not less effect. If her doings are private, they are of vital importance. If singly they are small, their variety and number baffle calculation. It is believed that the usefulness of man would be greatly contracted, were it not for the silent assistance afforded by woman. Many a public benefactor of his species would faint under his labours, but for the soothing attentions and encouraging sympathies of home.

One single fact speaks volumes for the power deposited in the woman over the character and welfare of the human race. To her is entrusted the solemn responsibility of giving the first impress to the human mind: it is she that sows the seeds of the future character. The child is the embryo man; whether that child shall be a good or a bad man, a useful or a useless member of society, are questions the solution of which devolves on the mother's management.

If such then be the responsibility of woman; and if to this extent is committed to her keeping the highest interests of the human family; certainly the question, by what means may her powers of enjoyment and usefulness be best developed, is one which it greatly concerns her to ponder. If education enhance the value of man, it still more decidedly exalts the worth of woman, since female influences—more especially with reference to the humbler classes,—are much more intellectual in their consequences than those of the other sex.

We have alluded to the degradation of woman in uncivilized countries: she is degraded, not merely because the perception of the man, as to what constitutes real worth and loveliness, is extremely imperfect, but because that worth does not exist: she is, in reality, an insignificant being. And without some degree of cultivation, woman is every where insignificant. Perhaps, generally speaking, more so than the other sex. Many of the duties of

man, in the lower walks of business, are such as might be performed by a savage. Bodily strength, animal courage, and instinctive shrewdness will often go far to supply the lack of intellectual superiority. But in the case of woman, supposing her possessed of these qualities, the situation which she fills, rarely calls for their exercise.

The vanity of personal attractions and of personal adornments, is a passion which, we pretend not to say, is peculiar to the sex under consideration: many of the other sex are most egregiously under its influence; and in them it is considered an indication of unpardonable bad taste. To the fair sex all men are inclined to concede considerable indulgence in this matter. We are not unwilling to do the same; and are even disposed to think the extreme of over-doing on this point, more pardonable than the extreme of negligence. Still it is lamentable when this passion assumes a commanding influence; when it becomes the absorbing theme of thought and conversation, and the all inspiring principle.

Imagine in the case of a young female, with whom dress and its ulterior and kindred subject love, have obtained absolute predominance in the mind. As she can truly relish nothing which has not some reference to these matters, her ordinary engagements press upon her as a task, except so far as the inspiration of her darling passion may be serviceable; and hence, not striving to excel, she

perhaps does not give satisfaction. If subjects of higher import are presented to her mind in occasional reading or hearing, she derives little apparent advantage; partly from distaste for the subject, and partly from inability to comprehend it—inability, rendered much more helpless by her ignorance of language: for her stock of words is, if possible, in shorter supply than her stock of ideas. Much therefore of what she reads and hears is verbally unintelligible; and not having acquired the power of generalization, she has a bad chance of comprehending any thing that rises above the merest simplicity.

Ordinary conversation often very faithfully exhibits the staple of the mind. It would be a curiosity of its kind, to over-hear the familiar intercourse of two such persons as we now describe: You would have in the first place the chapter of "accidents and offences" in full detail, with suitable remarks and surmisings; then probably a prolonged discussion on some point relative to the colour, quality, or shape of an article of dress. The affairs of some neighbour would next be taken into consideration, and fully investigated and settled. Then come the *on dits* touching the courtship of A, the marriage of B, the funeral of C, and the confinement of Mrs. D.

Now the antetype of this description must be acknowledged to be a very imperfect specimen of what woman should be. Even so far as personal

happiness is concerned, we shall find nothing here to awaken envy: happiness must take its complexion and value from the objects and sources whence it is derived. A paltry mind with mean pursuits cannot have exalted enjoyments.

And then what promise does such a character hold out of comfort or respectability in subsequent life! If youth is vain, maturity will be worthless. With regard to the matrimonial connexion, though none of the affairs of life surely call for the exercise of caution and discernment more than this, yet the subject of our remarks neither exercises caution nor discernment. It would be vain to expect her to do so; she is the mere creature of impulse and circumstances; and therefore, if comparatively happy in her choice, she owes little or nothing to any good sense possessed by herself. What is called *courtship* is usually an exhibition of flippancy peculiar to the occasion; that is, of flippancy some degrees more concentrated than is customarily displayed by such persons. And who expects a flippant bride to be a judicious matron? Perhaps she has strong affection for her partner; but, alas! her affection is placed on a narrow and tottering basis; and little is she aware of the manifold trials it will have to endure, or the small moral resources she possesses for its maintenance.

Mutual concession and forbearance, especially in small every day matters, form the grand secret of conjugal peace; but unhappily the parties

whose case we are considering, have neither learned to value the blessing, nor the best means of its attainment. They have made no provision for the duties of their new station, and having always lived extempore, they will still continue so to live.

Collisions of opinion and of personal convenience may be expected to occur betwixt husband and wife, under any circumstances; and when there is neither grace nor sense sufficient to break the shock, such scenes must be disagreeable enough. It then becomes simply a question of relative strength, and is a case governed entirely by the great rule of barbarians, that the weaker party must submit to the stronger. This, in most cases will be the woman; yet not invariably; for ascendancy is not always gained by mere physical force. But submission, by whomsoever yielded, will be yielded as sullenly as it was demanded uncouthly; and not without giving rise to an explosion of angry feeling and rude invective. These are edifying scenes to set before children, who are not slow to catch the same spirit, and lisp the same phraseology. Trained in such a school, by such examples, and taught little that is good, and much that is positively evil; no wonder that social happiness should be very much at discount among the lower orders. The blessing is not cultivated, because it is not appreciated: for a taste for that which is intrinsically excellent may be lost by perfect disquietude.

On clear grounds we may assume, that the habits

and character of the rising generation, and of domestic comforts generally, are much more under the power of woman than of man; and it is equally clear that the power thus possessed, depends for its value and efficiency on the moral and mental cultivation received. Under this impression we invite the attention of the young female reader to a few points, which, in their bearing on the usefulness and happiness of her future life, must be considered of great importance.

And, First, we recommend you to *seek an experimental acquaintance with Christianity*. Piety is the surrender of the heart to God;—the enjoyment of conscious reconciliation with God, through faith in the merits of Christ. The result of this is supreme love to God, and universal good will to man. Piety then may well be regarded as not only an essential element of education, but the very basis of all moral and intellectual excellence. Mere literature may refine the taste and the manners, but cannot refine the affections. The natural barbarity of the heart will yield to nothing but the power of divine grace.

In becoming pious, the change you would experience would not be more strikingly apparent to others, than it would be great and agreeable to yourself. You would exchange one set of feelings for another; and a most happy exchange it would be. It would be expelling a horde of lazy, vulgar, impertinent, and quarrelsome persons from your prem-

ises, and receiving in their place a select number of peaceable, intelligent, and agreeable friends. Your present happiness, even such as it is, is wholly an uncertainty; it is unsheltered from a thousand withering influences. A paltry rival in love or dress;—a disappointment in some anticipated amusement;—a reproachful imputation on your character, an evil which may happen to the best;—a fit of sickness;—a situation not answering your ideas of what is agreeable;—each, or any of these is sufficient, not merely to mar your peace, but even to make you miserable. But get religion, and then happiness striking its roots deep in your bosom, and fed by a secret stream flowing from the throne of God, will be able to resist the unkindly vicissitudes to which all human bliss is subject. We do not say that grace will make you impassable to external influences; but it will be an antagonist or corrective influence to all: it will make that which is painful tolerable, and that which is pleasant still more so. It will enable you to educe moral benefit, we might say moral pleasure, from natural evil; for there is a luxury known only to the virtuous, in the exercise of meekness, patience, humility and a forgiving spirit.

But besides the softening, humanizing power of religion on the feelings, it gives elevation to the mind, intellectually considered. Some acquaintance with divine truth is necessary to its existence; and all religious truth is noble and ennobling. The

mind conversant with it, is assimilated to its nature; the thoughts are lifted from a noisome dunghill to a pure and holy atmosphere. We have observed that this change would be apparent to others; it will be observable even in your countenance and person. As when a respectable family succeeds to an idle and disorderly one in the occupancy of a house; outward appearances give unequivocal signs of the change. Such is the case when the soul, the tenant of the body, is converted from vanity and sin to wisdom and purity.

“The mind’s sweetness will have its operation  
Upon the body, clothes, and habitation.”

Observe the countenance:—Before, there was the discontented gloom, the scowling frown, the foolish simper, the scornful smile, the obstreperous laugh; but these are amongst the old things that are done away. There is now the gravity which betokens the presence of an immortal spirit, originally created, and now renewed in the image of God. But it is not gloomy gravity. The serenity and peace which reign within, will make your visible heavens clear and untroubled; while the light of God’s countenance shining upon your soul, will often add radiance to serenity.

*Resolve to improve your mind by reading as you have opportunity.* At all events, read a portion of the Holy Scriptures daily; and if domestic duties

permit, have some other useful book in which you may occasionally read a few pages. This may be accomplished under very unfavourable circumstances; if your opportunities are more propitious, act on a more expanded system. Endeavour to exercise your own powers of thinking and judging; get settled general principles, and an acquaintance with the import of words, these will assist you to understand what you read and hear. Perseverance in these exercises will soon give you to feel that you have a mind of your own, which will gradually gain strength and clearness; and every step will strengthen the conviction that the mind is indeed the jewel, and the body but the casket; and that in attending to the requirements of the latter, to the neglect of the former, you have been guilty of most preposterous folly. Surely it is desirable to be able to assign reasons for your conduct, to give an opinion of your own, to take part in intelligent conversation, and to be as superior in mind as you are in person to the animal creation; but this can only be accomplished by diligently cultivating your mental powers.

*Cultivate amiable tempers.* Conversion throws the disposition into a happier mould. That spiritual 'grafting' by which the New Testament so strikingly illustrates the work of regeneration, has the effect of giving sweetness and beauty to the tempers. It cannot be otherwise when the soul is united to Christ, and partakes of his very nature. Yet still, subsequent attention is necessary to carry out

the great principles received in conversion. The soil is broken up, and the seeds of virtue are sown; but care is requisite to bring them to perfection; for bad tempers, like bad weeds, will spring up on the best cultivated soils.

Our idea of fine tempers is not that of one which is never provoked, but of one which is not *easily* provoked; and when it is so, easily appeased. To be immovable under all circumstances is unnatural, and certainly indicates disease, either of the head or the heart; such a stagnant condition cannot be associated either with much happiness, or with the power of diffusing happiness. A river is a more interesting object than a pool, although noisy, and occasionally inconvenient. It will be admitted that a large amount of human happiness depends upon the management of the tempers; and also that females, from their more social and domesticated habits, have a larger share in this business than the other sex. One person in a family, with a thoroughly bad temper, will exercise an influence on the peace of that family lamentable to contemplate. How different the influence of one whose disposition is amiable!

The first step towards self-government is self-knowledge. Study your peculiarities and failings, and resolve to be doubly watchful where you are doubly in danger. Impatience of contradiction, and a painful sensibility to insult arise from a morbid idea of self-importance; while the want of calmness and

self-possession in administering reproof, obviously shews a want of self-respect. If you are amongst children, and especially if you are the mother of children, you have a peculiar reason for guarding your temper. If you reprove and chastise them in a passion, they will at once despise your authority, and imitate your vice. You perhaps say, they are refractory; admitting that they are, yet remember, explosions of anger will not cure them. Shew them by your example that you can govern yourself; this will wonderfully help them to submit to be governed by you. Equanimity or evenness is an essential element of good temper. We do not refer to an unnatural sameness, but to a quality opposed to those fits and starts, those ups and downs, which are more frequent and more violent than circumstances or sobriety warrant. Some people, otherwise excellent, are lamentably at fault in this particular. When the instrument is in tune, you have excellent harmony; if otherwise, the discord is horrible; and what is most deplorable, you often cannot tell the cause of these great and sudden transitions. We are creatures fond of variety; but he must have a monstrous appetite for novelty, who can "thank such a misery for change;" who can endure to be caressed beyond reason one day, and almost in bodily fear the next. These capricious variations of temper are highly discreditable, and shew the individual to be far more under the power of circumstance, than is consistent either with comfort or dignity.

The successful control of temper would be greatly aided by intentional and habitual sobriety of speech. As foolish tempers naturally lead to foolish words, so the latter, in their turn, greatly assist the growth of the former. "Grievous words" are often found to "stir up anger," both in the person speaking, and the person spoken to. We certainly are not persuaded that our female friends need caution on this subject more than ourselves; although it will be allowed that, generally speaking, they are less parsimonious of speech than the other sex. Not, we presume, from any peculiarity either of the vocal mechanism, or of the mind itself; but simply from their more social circumstances and habits, affording rather more opportunities of exercising a power which doubtless improves by exercise.

*Be discreet in forming friendship.* All hearts are not equally susceptible of friendship; nevertheless, there are few young persons, and few especially of the sex we now address, who do not feel their happiness incomplete without a friend with whom they can reciprocate thought and sympathy, and reveal those bosom emotions which are too delicate for general exposure. They are happy who find a friend truly worthy of the name. Do not hastily commit yourself to any one. There are few greater misfortunes to young people, than the formation of improper intimacies. You may, very probably, find persons possessing the companionable qualities of gaiety and good humour with little sense, and

still less of moral worth. But these showy attractions in the absence of sterling excellence, are not only worthless, but dangerous. Your heart is composed of pliant materials, ready to take any impression; and to bring yourself into close and frequent contact with vice and folly, would be the likeliest of all means to become vile and foolish yourself. Have you a companion whom you love? Then how do you describe her character? Does she manifest a marked reverence for every thing that appertains to religion? Do you never hear a joke at the expense of piety or pious people, and never at the expense of truth? Is she neat in dress, with little observable vanity or anxiety about it? Is she careless about gadding abroad in search of pleasure; and does she evidently find her happiness in the quiet and assiduous performance of domestic duties? Is her temper such, that you can oppose her views without the risk or the fear of incurring her displeasure? Is she beloved at home as a daughter, a sister, or a servant? If such be the character of your friend, you cannot too highly value her. But if, on the other hand, you have a companion who is seriously defective in any of the points we have enumerated, there is room for fear that you will suffer from your intimacy.

There is another sort of friendship to which we shall be expected to allude; and still more caution is necessary here, because once formed, it is irrevocable. We allude, of course, to the matrimonial

connexion. It is unfortunate that many are more impatient of restraint and more regardless of advice in this matter than in any other; but it rarely happens that headstrong precipitancy in this affair fails to receive a severe retribution. Pause before you take this step without a reasonable prospect of comfort as it respects the means of subsistence. Examples of childish thoughtlessness on this point are exceedingly common; but such parties surely enough discover, perhaps when too late, that though affection is as essential an element of the happiness of married life, as air is to natural life; yet the body has wants which neither pure air nor pure love can adequately supply. Some, we are aware, err in the opposite extreme, making wealth the substitute for almost every thing beside, and whose idea of a *good* match is simply that it is a rich one. Experience however too often shews this doctrine to be unsound. Many of these *good matches* turn out to be good for nothing, but to be sources of disappointment and wretchedness.

Again, we recommend you to look for these qualifications of mind and judgment in the person you accept as your husband, that will enable you truly to respect him as your counsellor and head, for you will find it no easy task to love the man whose intellect you despise.

Do not overlook temper. "Make no friends with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to

thy soul." Thus says the wisest of mortals. We would have you attend to the advice, unless you are willing to live in constant misery.

Presuming that you are pious, we would say, never think of being united to a person who is a stranger to piety. Congeniality is certainly one of the great principles of attachment; but when parties are completely at variance on so important a subject, deep and uninterrupted harmony can scarcely exist. Religion has awakened within you a complete system of views, feelings, and prospects which find no response or sympathy in the heart of your friend. In such a union there is small promise of happiness, and much cause to apprehend moral danger.

Finally, be not fastidious in your requirements, nor romantic in your expectations. Remember your failings. Expect the man of your choice to be a person encompassed like yourself with infirmities, and make due allowance for the holiday manners as you would for the holiday dress of the suitor.

Exercising in this manner reasonable caution, and not despising the counsel of those whose experience entitles their judgment to respect; more especially, not neglecting to implore the guidance and blessing of Heaven, you have all human reason to hope that the contemplated change in your condition will conduce to your interest and happiness.

As a *wife* and a *mother*, let the impulse of affection be guided and sustained by principles in discharging the duties arising out of these important

relations. Remember how much that is desirable in the conjugal state devolves upon yourself. It is for you to give home those attractions which will exalt you in the esteem of your husband, and leave him no pretext for seeking comfort abroad. Let your prudence in applying your resources to domestic purposes, be equal to his industry in procuring them. Study the art of making small means avail to large purposes; and while neatness and comfort characterize your household arrangement, do not attach that excessive importance to minute points of order, that would make you uneasy at their slightest infringement. Our ideas on matters of taste, are sometimes uncouth; but we claim some allowance for what we cannot help. Perhaps your husband does not fully appreciate what you highly value; but let not this disturb you farther than to endeavour quietly and gradually to modify his taste to your satisfaction. Always be prepared to yield trifling points rather than provoke strife, and if resistance appear to be your duty, let it rather take the character of mild remonstrance, than of angry debate.

*Let maternal affection be wisely manifested.* Yield to the wishes of your children; but never if concession would compromise your authority and responsibility as a parent. Supply their wants as far as you are able; but do not cherish improper habits. Be indulgent; but never to the injury of their health or morals. Be careful of the person,

but still more of the mind of your child. Watch the opening intellect; and anticipate evil by the introduction of good principles and good habits. Let judicious counsel be fortified by unexceptionable example; and let both be aided by daily prayer to that gracious Being whose blessing alone can make your children wise, and good and happy.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### ESTIMATE OF EDUCATION.

IN the course of the preceding remarks, many opportunities have been embraced of noticing the benefits of education; and besides these incidental notices, the attention of the reader in the preceding two chapters has been specially directed to those which result from its influence on business and religion. Still it is conceived that this part of the subject has not received that deliberate consideration it merits, and a general recapitulation and survey of the advantages of knowledge and mental culture, will not perhaps be deemed unsuitable in conclusion.

And first of all, it may be observed, that the ca-

pacity for public usefulness, depends chiefly on the possession of useful knowledge, and of the acuteness, accuracy, and comprehension of intellect which is induced by education.

Nearly all our blessings come to us in the channel of human instrumentality: by this wise arrangement, opportunity is given for the exercise of virtuous dispositions, and all classes of society are thus bound together by the tie of mutual dependence.

But the slightest consideration must convince us, that a man wholly unlettered is necessarily confined to a very humble department of this great business of promoting the interests of his species. Only so far as sensitive comforts contribute to human happiness, and the strength of his sinews is available to the production of these comforts, can he be said to be a public benefactor. But the happiness of man is principally dependent on his moral and intellectual character, and towards the advancement of these, the ignorant can do little or nothing: here intellect and talent, though not solely, are nevertheless indispensably requisite. And it is important to remark, that persons in the humblest walks of life, while they have many opportunities of benefitting their fellow-creatures in these their highest interests, are never wholly cut off from the means of acquiring some ability of doing so.

There are three relations in which most men stand to society; the domestic, civil, and religious: each of these originate duties which cannot be ful-

filled, and open channels of usefulness not to be improved without some measure of intelligence.

The duties which parents owe to their children, for instance, are most arduous and responsible. To supply them with physical comforts is but a minor duty.. And even in the discharge of this, education renders no small assistance. If correct in our statements relative to the favourable influence of knowledge on the prosecution of business; if it is certain that practical skill is always aided by scientific and comprehensive views, and industrious habits advance with advancing intelligence; then it is clear, that, with some education, a parent will stand a better chance of promoting even the temporal interests of his family, than if he were entirely uncultivated.

But children have rational and immortal, as well as corporeal natures. They have understandings to be cultivated, vicious propensities to be repressed, good habits to be formed; long and vigilant is the training they require in order to fit them to be creditable members of society, and heirs of life everlasting. Here is employment sufficient to task the most cultivated mind, and the most exalted piety. Where there is neither cultivation nor piety, the work cannot and will not be attempted; for how can he train and nurture the minds of his children, who can scarcely be said to have a mind of his own; or how feed them with wisdom and knowledge, when he has neither wisdom nor knowledge to impart. Indeed the formation of their characters intellectu-

ally considered, is a matter of which he has little conception, and that which he does not understand, he cannot feel to be a duty; what he has never thought worth his own acquisition he will never be very anxious his children should possess. Even in promoting their spiritual interests—supposing him pious,—his means will be small, and his effects feeble; for in every thing which belongs to the ability of imparting religious knowledge, he is deficient, and piety unconnected with information and good sense, is seen to great disadvantage; for want of this, much that is valuable, even in his example, will be lost to his children.

The contemplation of a man, in his connexion with civil affairs, or as a member of political society, will display the value of knowledge as an instrument of public usefulness.

No one doubts that political measures in some degree affect the interests of every order of society, and that the happiness of even the lowest orders is considerably mixt up with public affairs. But common people are not always sufficiently aware of the power which they themselves possess of affecting or modifying these affairs. But in popular governments like our own, that power is very great. The opinion of the people on any particular point, when harmoniously concentrated and vigorously expressed, exercises a potent ascendancy over legislators themselves, and is often found to be absolutely uncontrollable. And it is not merely as a petitioner

to parliament, or a voter at elections, that a private individual can exert his political influence; he can disseminate his convictions in more private ways, and to a wider extent; and thus, even in his *unofficial* character, make some impression on public opinion. Not only has government often been compelled to yield to that opinion in measures of mighty import, but such measures have sometimes originated in the suggestions, or been accelerated by the influence of a single individual, whose name probably was never formally connected with any political matter whatever.

In this view, popular education assumes a character of vital importance. It is evidently desirable that the people should possess enlightened and comprehensive views on the subject of political economy, because they will otherwise most probably be the dupes of blind self-interest, or of self-interested individuals, and thus lend what influence they possess to a mischievous purpose. Considered merely as subjects, and unable, or declining to exert the slightest influence on political events, still it must be a satisfaction to be able to form a rational estimate of the merits of any legislative enactment by a survey of its different bearings. Their own obedience to law would thus at least be more enlightened, very probably more hearty and cheerful.

No honest government need fear the diffusion of knowledge among the people. From ignorance every kind of government has more to fear than to

hope; for though vice is the first, ignorance is undoubtedly the second thing to occasion political calamities. All experience has verified the scriptural axiom, that "wisdom and knowledge are the stability of the times."

But there are other duties involved in our civil relations besides these merely political ones to which we have adverted. As an intelligent being, the interests of man must have a special reference to his mind. To assist therefore in elevating the intellectual character of society, by the diffusion of useful knowledge, and a taste for scientific pursuits, must be one of the noblest channels in which public philanthropy can flow; and he who contributes largely to this great object, must be ranked among the best benefactors of his species. But in this business, intellectual acquirements must certainly form the principal and most direct qualification. Wealth would indeed enable a person to accomplish this object in a second-hand way; but then a rich man would scarcely attempt such a thing without that high sense of the value of learning which the possession alone can inspire. As reasonably might we look for religious zeal in an unconverted person as a strong desire to promote popular education in one that is unlettered.

And considering the various ways in which intelligence advances the secular interests of society; the impulse it gives to industry, and the numerous springs of emolument which it opens, it is obvious

that no one adds more efficiently to the amount of corporeal comfort, than he who extends general education.

Looking at national prosperity as it is affected by wealth, we shall discover the diffusion of knowledge united with improved morals to be the grand cause, and who does not know that the genius of a Watt, a Strutt, an Arkwright, and others, have developed mines of incalculable wealth; nor has the valour of Wellington or Nelson contributed more to the strength, and even the glory of the British Nation than these honourable characters.

But the noblest benevolence is that which is employed in promoting the spiritual interests of mankind; for nothing is so vitally connected with human happiness, or assists so largely in its advancement as pious feelings, and moral excellence in general. And this is a department of well doing more accessible to ordinary persons than most others. Opportunities of being useful to the souls of men are constantly presenting themselves to persons in the humblest condition. Associated then with piety, intellectual attainments possess superior value as a means of doing good. It may be said that a person of decided piety will be useful by his example, although very ignorant; but we reply, that the same example would be much more influential, if connected with some degree of cultivation: from such a connexion it would derive attractions of commanding power. Intellectual superiority

gives a weight to the character which greatly facilitates the communication of religious instruction.

Besides, what we are now recommending constitutes the very power or talent for the display of this species of benevolence. Conversion is indeed the work of God; and we grant that in its accomplishment he sometimes employs instruments of unpromising fitness. But these are mere exceptions; spiritual good being usually communicated by a prepared and naturally efficient instrumentality; and in this work the highest talent finds ample exercise. To instruct the ignorant, reply to the objector, rebuke the audacious, and silence the gainsayer; to grapple with the manœuvring sophist, and remove the endless scruples of the diffident and despairing—these are tasks which need not be attempted without a tolerable measure of wisdom and information. It is admitted that these duties belong especially to the ministerial character, yet they are duties which, as they often fall in the way of others, so none who have ability, act out of character in performing them. Among laymen have been found not only some of the ablest defenders of Christianity, but many of its most zealous and successful promoters; who though sometimes wielding unpolished weapons, and defective it may be, in the technicalities of warfare, yet with the hearty zeal, and lofty courage of volunteers, they often accomplish wonders.

Learning further establishes its claim to utility

by releasing the mind from the bondage of superstition, and those manifold fears, equally vain and tormenting, to which it gives birth.

The most gloomy and prominent features in the history of all savage and unchristianized nations, is superstition. This degrading evil originates wholly in ignorance. In the absence of intellectual light, the imagination frames its monstrous spectres, as children terrify themselves in the dark by mere shadows and nonentities, mistaken for beings of fearful name. Ignorance of the origin of suffering or natural evil seems to be the chief source of superstition. Unable to believe that it is the offspring of a benevolent Deity, or to see that it is connected with moral evil as its judicial, and often indeed as its *natural* consequence, they admit the fanciful notion that it is the capricious infliction of supernatural powers of malignant disposition. These vile and hateful deities thenceforward assume in the imagination, a character of dreadful importance, and to obtain an exemption from their wanton malevolence becomes an all absorbing article in their religious system. For this, urged on by awful terror, and too often by the influence of a knavish and interested priesthood; a thousand spells and rites are performed, a thousand self-inflicted cruelties are submitted to, and hecatombs of human lives are sacrificed to the horrible delusion. Whatever may be their speculations concerning the author of happiness, it is certain that their eagerness to propitiate the author

of evil usually leaves them little time to think of him, and little inclination to yield him practical homage. Fear is their leading religious affection; of hope they know but little, and of love nothing. The worship of devils becomes the established religion, and often remains the only indication that these miserable dupes are conscientious beings.

This is a true picture of our own ancestors in drudical times, as it is but too just a representation of many heathen countries at the present hour. Long since, however, have these monstrous shadows fled from our own land before the rising brightness of scriptural christianity; and those relics of devil-worship which yet linger, in the form of charms, witchcraft, and jugglery, are gradually disappearing as science and revelation diffuse their radiance among the common people. When the belief of supernatural influence is at once undirected by Revelation, and uncontrolled by moral principle, it is certain, from its power over the imagination, to lead to endless extravagancies; it will be the grand resort for the solution of every mysterious phenomenon. Accordingly when ignorant persons are visited by some calamity of singular character or rare occurrence, they are very apt to imagine themselves the victims of some unholy league between the archfiend and some malicious neighbour; and to learn the truth of the matter, they will probably have recourse to one of those miserable knaves, bearing the significant appellation of *wise man*, from whose ambigu-

ous oracles they are sometimes led to fix the charge of sorcery upon an innocent person, and to attempt the most unjust, and sometimes fatal retaliation. These, it is well known, are every day scenes in most uncivilized countries, as indeed they were some centuries ago in our own: nor are they by any means uncommon in many of our provincial districts even now. Many persons known to us, are, or have been the dupes of this superstition, and many scenes like that just described have taken place within our recollection and knowledge. It is gratifying however to know, that by the increasing power and spread of the light of truth, this evil has not only been immensely lessened in amount, but what remains has received such an impress of feebleness and infirmity as to betoken its speedy dissolution.

It may be observed also, that there are many natural phenomena of unobvious and mysterious character which are referred by the vulgar to supernatural interference. Thousands of things both in art and nature, stamped by them with the character of mystery and miracle, have been ascertained by philosophers to be within the grasp of human ingenuity, or conformable to nature.\* And from what has already been accomplished by the wide diffusion of religious and scientific knowledge, we are

\* In an interesting work on Natural Magic by Sir David Brewster, the reader will find this position most amply illustrated.

assured that all the idle dreams of superstition yet remaining—dreams, involving on the one hand the most pitiful credulity, and on the other, the most cowardly unbelief, will wholly vanish as the shining light of truth goes on in its brilliant career to the perfect day.

Education is valuable also by its hostility to prejudice and bigotry, and its tendency to promote a candid and liberal spirit. Nothing reflects a brighter lustre on the character than that intellectual honesty and noble independence of mind, which enables a man to conceive and maintain just views of a subject in defiance of prejudice and party predilections, and even of interest itself; which makes him as ready to admit that which is truly valuable in the arguments or measures of an opponent, as to acknowledge that which is imperfect in his own. It must however be confessed that this is rather a virtue than a mental accomplishment; still, as it is scarcely ever seen in its perfection except in minds of the first order, it is clear that sound and comprehensive information is highly favourable to its existence. On the other hand, prejudice and bigotry are very generally connected with ignorance, and hence the epithet *narrow minded* is usually applied to those who are the subjects of it.

All men are naturally addicted to the vice of taking the worst view of a matter which involves the reputation of others, and the very best of that

which concerns themselves.—This is a disease of the heart and demands moral remedies, but comprehensive knowledge, if it do not cure, will mitigate it; it will give a more agreeable modification to the evil. If the propensity in question be united with great ignorance it will be more disgustingly exhibited. Partial and contracted views form the very foundation of bigotry, and it seems impossible but as the mind is enlightened and expanded, the monster should have less credit with his possessor as his deformity is more clearly apparent.

The value of education is strikingly exemplified in its influence on social intercourse and domestic happiness. It may be said, that the grand source of domestic happiness is *kindness*, manifested in agreeable manners and tempers. This we admit, but at the same time observe, that an ignorant person who is amiable in his tempers, would be incomparably more so if he enjoyed the benefits of education. Disagreeable manners are almost inseparable from low breeding; even under the most favourable circumstances with respect to disposition, there is usually a coarseness in the exhibition of vulgar kindness which sometimes renders it disgusting, and always deprives it of that grace and beauty which gives it half its value. But cultivation not only imparts a charm to the manifestation of affection, it heightens the affection itself; it forms, in some sense, the very basis of friendship. There may be a sort of animal at-

tachment in the absence both of intellectual and moral worth; but nothing deserving the name of friendship can result from this. Real excellence of character, can only command that deep respect and pure affection, which constitutes the essence of friendship. The mutual love of ignorant persons, is a very different thing from the exalted perception of reciprocal worth which binds together the well informed.

We may notice as a special inconvenience attending the want of education, the propensity it occasions of adopting unfounded prejudices, and suspicions, and of maintaining them as obstinately as they received them blindly. Now such a disposition, entrenching itself often in a mistaken sense of duty, may co-exist with a natural disposition far from bad, as well as with considerable attainments in religion, but it cannot fail to have a blighting effect on the happiness of domestic intercourse. If one or more of the members of a family, is in the habit of defending his own opinions with self-complacent pertinacity, and of fighting those of others with contemptuous violence; feelings must thereby be necessarily created, inconsistent with amicable friendship, and domestic harmony. He is the most despicable and disgusting of all companions whose sentiments you cannot disavow, without becoming an object of base suspicion, as if, in opposing him, you had taken leave of conscience and virtue; such notions of infallibility and self-conceit are the genuine off-spring of ignorance.

Conversation, it must always be remembered, is chiefly dependent on knowledge for every thing which makes it interesting and edifying. Where no ideas are possessed, none can be communicated, and if the thoughts be paltry, the discourse must be stamped with folly and impertinence. The converse of ignorant persons may, for ought we know, be gratifying to one another; but to the well informed, it is wholly without interest or attraction. In the interchange of lofty and valuable sentiments, in the refined communion of elevated and congenial minds, there is a luxury and a charm which ranks among the highest pleasures of humanity. To this pleasure the uncultivated are utterly strangers. Some from want of ideas may be said to be incapable of conversing at all, except in yeas and nays, or if they venture further, they only treat us with insipidity and folly.

Once more we observe, that the cultivation of the mind, and the pursuit of useful knowledge by every man as he has opportunity, is strongly to be recommended as a source of great personal happiness. This view of the subject has attracted considerable attention in the preceding part of this discussion, and it is indeed so obvious a consideration, and so connected with every thing relating to the influence of education, that it can never be wholly lost sight of. Human enjoyment is of three kinds, animal, rational, and moral. As the material world affects us through the medium of external sense, there are

also certain powers of the mind, analogous to the bodily senses, which enable us to correspond with the world of truth and science. There is an intellectual taste, and an intellectual vision, which are as really gratified with their appropriate objects, as the corporeal senses of taste and seeing are with theirs. We advance farther, and affirm, that the pleasure of the mind is far superior to that of the body—this will instantly be admitted by every one whose experience qualifies him to decide on the subject. If the rational part of our nature, be unspeakably more noble than the animal, it is natural to expect that both its pleasures and its pains will be far more exquisite.

It is true, that persons engaged in ordinary business, labour under the disadvantage of having only brief and occasional opportunities of enjoying this pleasure; yet this evil is provided with its own corrective; for this infrequency of opportunity, generates a craving analogous in its influence on mental, as hunger on animal pleasure; it imparts to the objects of study, a freshness of novelty which both sweetens their pursuit, and facilitates their attainments. Literary labour to persons wholly devoted to it, necessarily partakes of the monotonous, and somewhat insipid character of a stated invocation, while to the individuals before alluded to, they possess the charm of an amusement.

Self-education is also connected with a high degree of moral pleasure. It is impossible for any

one to proceed far in this business without discovering—if he were previously unaware of the fact, that the understanding is a power or talent, at once admitting indefinite improvement, and capable, in proportion to that improvement of being applied to practical purposes, highly beneficial to the best interests of mankind. With such conviction, he ceases to regard the work as a matter of mere amusement or indifference, it assumes the importance of a duty, and one which conscience, while it forbids him to neglect, stimulates and encourages him, at the same time to perform, by its soothing congratulations. And the pleasure of mental improvement to such a person, is not the mere negative pleasure of an exemption from self-reproach; it is a positive and most elevated satisfaction—the satisfaction of well-doing—of improving the noblest of God's gifts—of acting in a manner worthy of his rational nature—of glorifying God, and of blessing, his fellow creatures.

But Revelation discloses an eternal world, and announces the highly interesting fact, that our present brief existence derives all its consequence from its connexion with eternity. This consideration places the value of mental culture, in a peculiar and most impressive light. If it be true that the smallest of our moral actions, touches some spring of our future destiny, and in some measure affects our eternal welfare; then how immeasurably must that welfare be affected by the self-cultivation we have

recommended. If our mental powers are a talent, then its improvement will receive a reward suitable to the diligence, fidelity, and self-denial, with which that improvement has been endeavoured, and those who neglect the duty, must be ranked among "the unprofitable servants." Those talents which a man is capable of acquiring by his own efforts, by supplying him with the means of doing good, furnish him at the same time, with the opportunity of securing [celestial honours, of inheriting that "glory, honour, immortality and eternal life" which will be the sure reward of "patient continuance in well doing." And, in fine, so far as the cultivation of the intellect, and the pursuit of useful knowledge are connected with piety, and may be regarded as a means of grace, they may affect the very question of our salvation.

**FINIS.**

